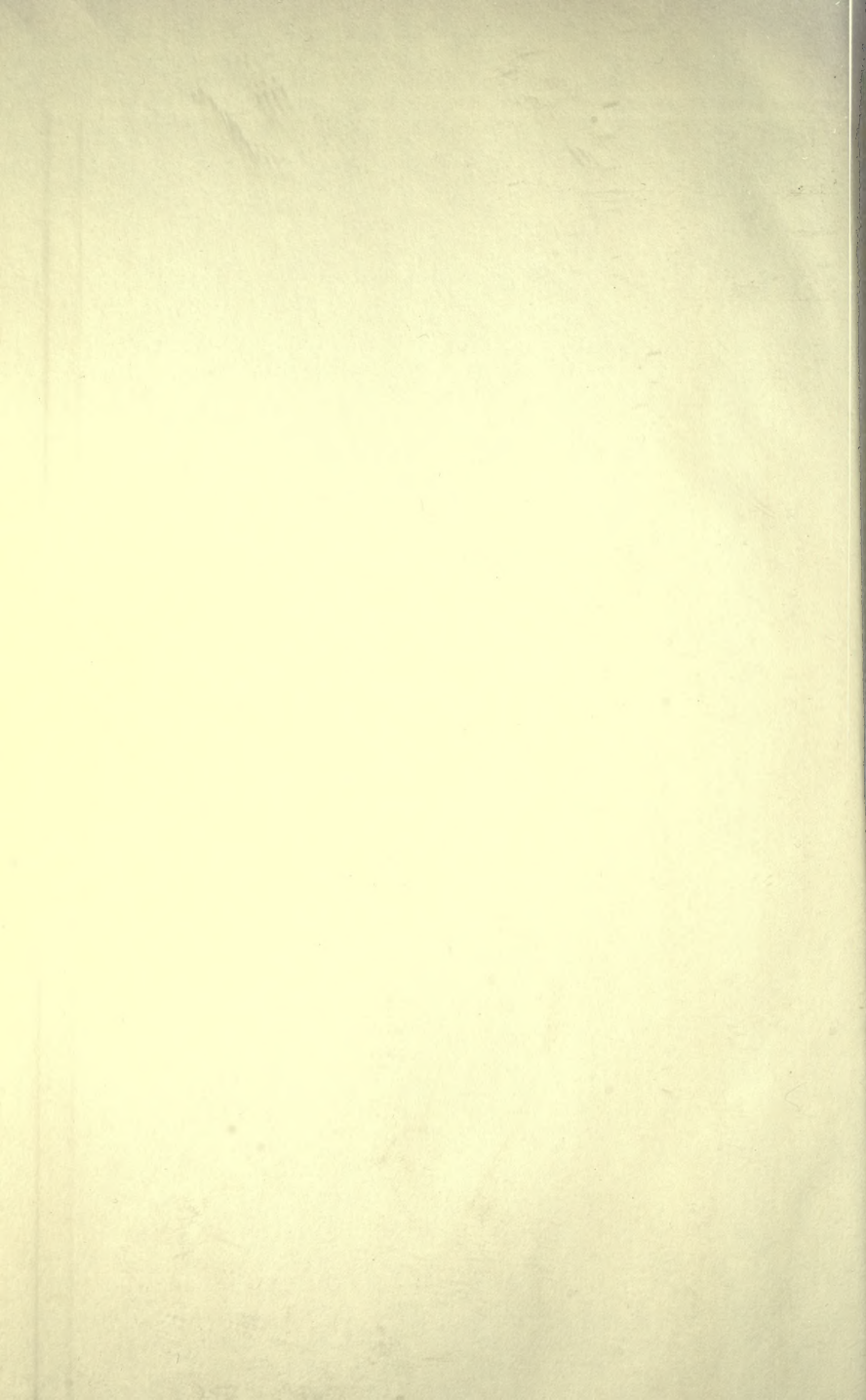




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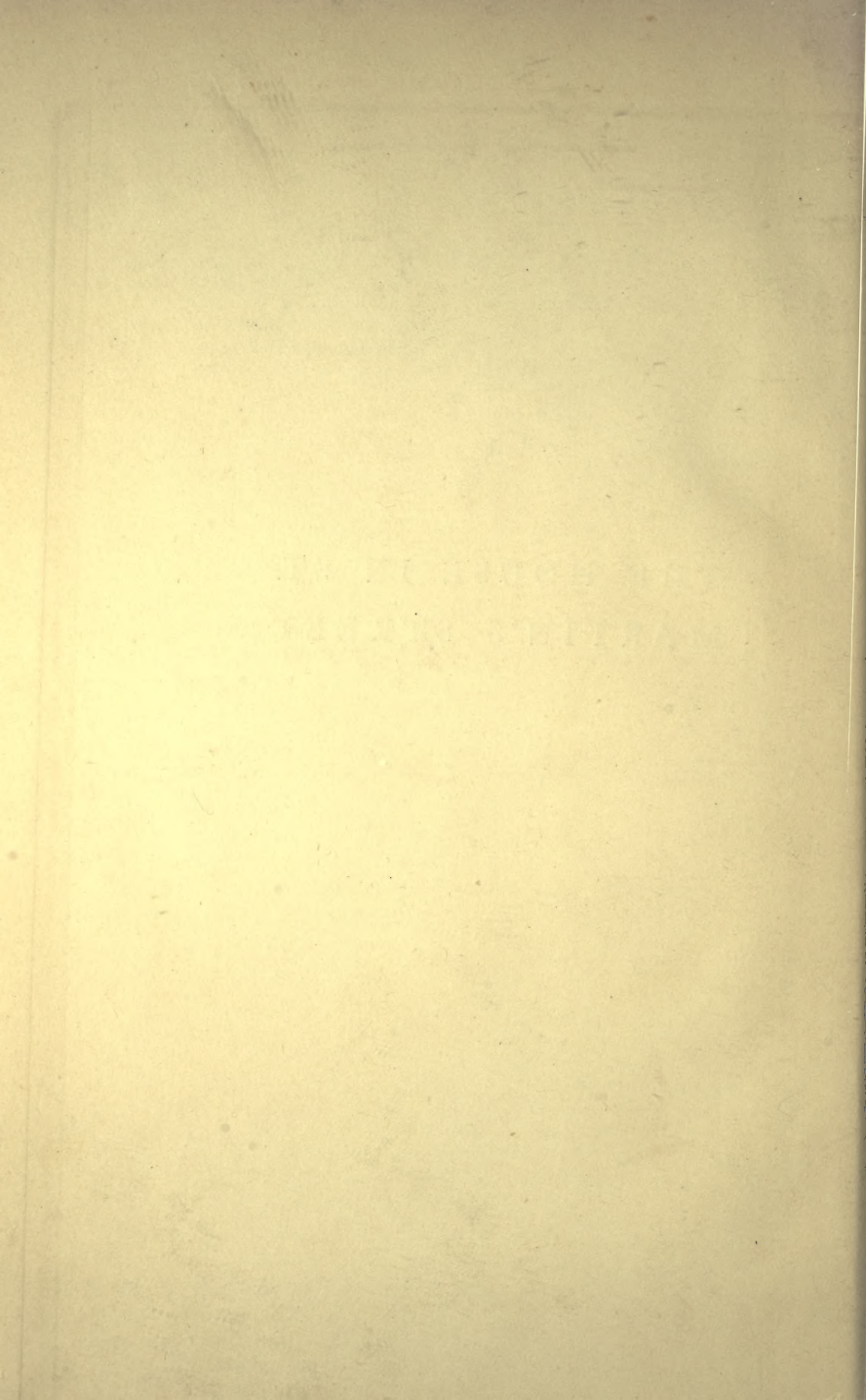
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THE HOUSE IN ST.
MARTIN'S STREET



Grove Cottage
Haguel
Amersford
Dec. 13th

Dear Mr Bradley,
Your notice in the
"Guardian" of my book
"The House in St. Martin's
Street" has given both me
and my sister, Miss
Ellen S. Bell, great
pleasure and I hope
you will accept our
cordial thanks for that
most kindly and
friendly article.
Yours ever, indeed,

entered heartily into the
spirit of my work, and
have found the Burney
atmosphere as exhilarating
as I have done.

I am glad you like
my Chapter about the
theatricals at Barborne
Lodge. My sister's
sketches of the fine old
house are now become
historical for within the
last three months it
has been burnt to the
ground! This was

done purposely by the
Corporation of Worcester
who had discovered
a vein of gravel beneath
its walls which they
wanted to use for making
roads. I dare say they
knew nothing of the
connection of Barborne
Lodge with the Burney
family - I wish the
National Trust Society
could have saved the
building -

With our kind regards

and looking forward to
have the pleasure of
meeting you either in
London or in the
'Splendid and Classic
Bath';

I remain

Yours sincerely

Constance Hill

GROVE COTTAGE,
FROGNAL,
HAMPSTEAD, N.W.

Feb. 31st

Dear Mr. Bradley,

I thank you
sincerely for your letter
and for your kind
gift of the photograph
of Fanny Burney's
tomb in Walcot Church-
yard. I know the spot
well though I have not
seen this new tomb -

Your expressions
in praise of the

"House in St. Martin's Street
are very gratifying to
me and my mother
is much pleased with
what you say of her
illustrations. I look
forward with interest to
reading your review!

I am glad to hear
of the tablet to Fanny
Burney to be unveiled
next year. It would
indeed be a pleasure to
us to be present on the

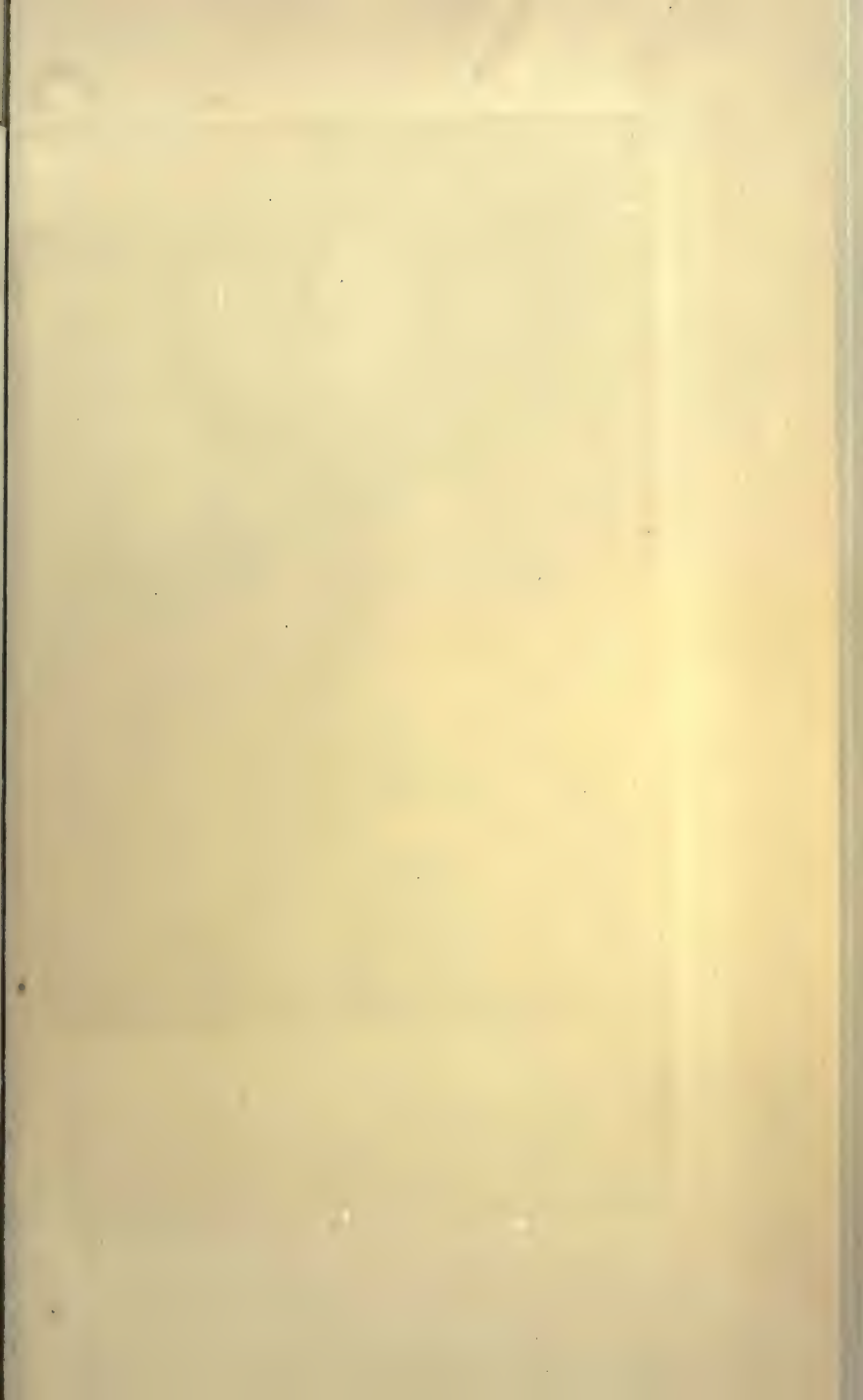
accession and we should
much enjoy seeing your
extra-illustrated edition
of the "Diary & Letters" and
your autograph letters of
Fanny Burney, as far
& kindly propose -

Thanking you again
for your letter,

I remain

Yours sincerely

Constance Hill





Thomas Hudson. Pinx.

Esther, Charles Rousseau & Richard Burney.

THE HOUSE IN ST.
MARTIN'S STREET
BEING CHRONICLES OF
THE BURNEY FAMILY

BY

CONSTANCE HILL

WITH ILLUSTRATIONS BY ELLEN
G. HILL AND REPRODUCTIONS
OF PORTRAITS, ETC., ETC.

"I love all that breed whom I can be said to
know; and one or two whom I hardly know,
I love upon credit, and love them because they
love each other."

DR. JOHNSON.

LONDON: JOHN LANE, THE BODLEY HEAD
NEW YORK: JOHN LANE COMPANY. MCMVII

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B. 9. 19



William, Charles, Thomas & Richard Manning

THE HOUSE IN ST. MARTIN'S STREET

BEING CHRONICLES OF
THE BURNEY FAMILY

BY

CONSTANCE HILL

WITH ILLUSTRATIONS BY ELLEN
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P R E F A C E

It has been observed by a shrewd writer that "there is no collection of letters belonging to the eighteenth century that has not an interest to-day. It is," he adds, "from letters alone that we can sincerely and honestly reconstruct the past."

This task of sincerely and honestly reconstructing the past, the writer of this work has endeavoured to perform in relation to the Burney family, having happily had access to a large number of their unpublished letters and journals, which throw fresh light on the material already before the public.

The episode chosen covers a period of nearly nine years—from the autumn of 1774 to the spring of 1783—during which period the Burneys were living in a house in St. Martin's Street, the last of their London homes. The life in that dwelling of this "most amiable and affectionate of clever families," and their intercourse with their interesting friends, is portrayed by its various

Preface

members from the revered head of the house down to his youngest daughter.

Fanny Burney's love for her father is proverbial. His affection for her and for all his children was equally strong. Here is a passage from a farewell letter written by him to Fanny in 1770 on the point of leaving Dover for France and Italy.

"I cannot set sail," he writes, "ere I have given you a word and a wish of kindness and affection. Continue to love me, and to believe that I love you, and that my family is never nearer my heart than when I am obliged to be far from them. It has ever been necessity, not choice, that has separated us. Had I an ark like that of Noah, I would have taken you all in it."

Many of these MS. letters of Fanny's deal with matters of a private or personal kind, and reveal her generous and loving nature more fully than is the case with her published correspondence so long known to the reading world. Her letters about Dr. Johnson are of special interest. It was from Fanny Burney's pen, as Macaulay has pointed out, that the public first learnt "how gentle and endearing his deportment could be." "Why did not Sir Joshua Reynolds paint Dr. Johnson when he was speaking to Dr. Burney or to you?" asked a mutual friend of Fanny one day.

Preface

We can well understand that this great man must have found balm for his irritable nerves in intercourse with his gentle young friend, and that even her silence was restful to him, since it had in it "every engaging expression of modesty and of intelligent observation."

Fanny found her pleasure in listening rather than in talking. A French writer in the *Revue des deux Mondes* has noticed this inclination of the authoress of *Evelina*. After mentioning some of the many striking portraits drawn by her, he says that, brilliant as these are, there is not one figure in the whole group that affects us more than "celle de la 'petite Burney' elle-même, silencieuse et timide, promenant autour d'elle, à travers près d'un siècle, le sourire ingénument malicieux de ses grands yeux gris."

The Burney MSS. contain, besides the correspondence of the family with each other, many letters addressed to them by Mrs. Thrale, so full of life and movement that they might have been written last week. They contain also letters from "Daddy Crisp," David Garrick, and others, and in addition to these, Fanny Burney's unpublished play of the "Witlings."

Among the books from which material has been necessarily drawn to be interwoven with the new matter are the "Early Diaries of Frances Burney," so ably edited by the late

Preface

Mrs. Raine Ellis, and a special copy of the "Diary and Letters of Madame d'Arblay" (edition of 1842), which contains marginal notes by a granddaughter of Mrs. Barrett, its editor. Reference has also been made to the recent and valuable edition edited by Mr. Austin Dobson.

Passages have been introduced from the "Memoirs of Dr. Burney," by Madame d'Arblay, from the "Anecdotes of Dr. Johnson," by Madame Piozzi, and from his "Letters" to her; and, in certain chapters, from the "Letters of Horace Walpole," edited by Mrs. Paget Toynbee.

The grateful thanks of the author of this work are especially due to the Rev. David Wauchope and to the Ven. Archdeacon Burney, for the loan of their Burney MSS. and portraits. She also wishes to express her gratitude to Mrs. Chappell, to Colonel Burney, and to Mr. Leverton Harris, for the loan of miniatures and other portraits; and she desires to record her indebtedness to the late Mrs. Arthur Durham for permission to introduce part of an interesting portrait group by Nollekens.

She was permitted by Mr. Wauchope to examine the original MSS. of the "Diary and Letters." It was interesting to observe that where erasures, or small alterations, had been made (in preparation for publication), this had

Preface

evidently been done with the object of sparing the feelings of people then living.

Both the author and the illustrator of this volume have visited all the places connected with the narrative, and numerous sketches have been made of the house in St. Martin's Street, which is happily still standing, and of many other scenes mentioned in the letters and diaries.

To have been living, as it were, for more than a year past amidst the Burney family, has been a source of great pleasure to the present writer, and she hopes that the reader may find equal pleasure in that genial atmosphere.

CONSTANCE HILL.

GROVE COTTAGE, FROGNAL,
HAMPSTEAD,

September, 1906.



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*The design on the binding of this book represents the initials of
the three Diarists framed by a carved moulding taken
from Mrs. Thrale's house in Bath.*

THE HOUSE IN ST.
MARTIN'S STREET



CHAPTER I

THE NEW HOME

IN the autumn of 1774, the Burney family, who had been living in Queen's Square, moved into their new home in St. Martin's Street.

"We came," writes Fanny, "ten days ago to this house which we purpose calling *Newton House* or *The Observatory*, or something that sounds *grand*, as Sir Isaak Newton's identical observatory is still subsisting, and we show it to all our visitors as our principal lyon. I am very much pleased with the mansion." And again she writes : "The house is a large and good one. It was built by Sir Isaak Newton, and when he constructed it, it stood in *Leicester Fields*, not *Square*, that he might have his Observatory unannoyed by neighbouring houses ; and his observatory is my favorite sitting place, where I can retire to read or write any of my private fancies or vagaries."

This quaint study, with its four glazed walls perched on the house-top, contained a fireplace,

The House in St. Martin's Street

an ornamented chimney-piece, and a cupboard. Its windows commanded wide-spreading views of London and its environs.

The observatory has disappeared, but the house in St. Martin's Street is still standing, and its outward appearance is otherwise little altered. On its southern side rises, as of yore, Orange Street Chapel, whilst to the north lies Leicester Square, whose trees can still be seen from a side window.

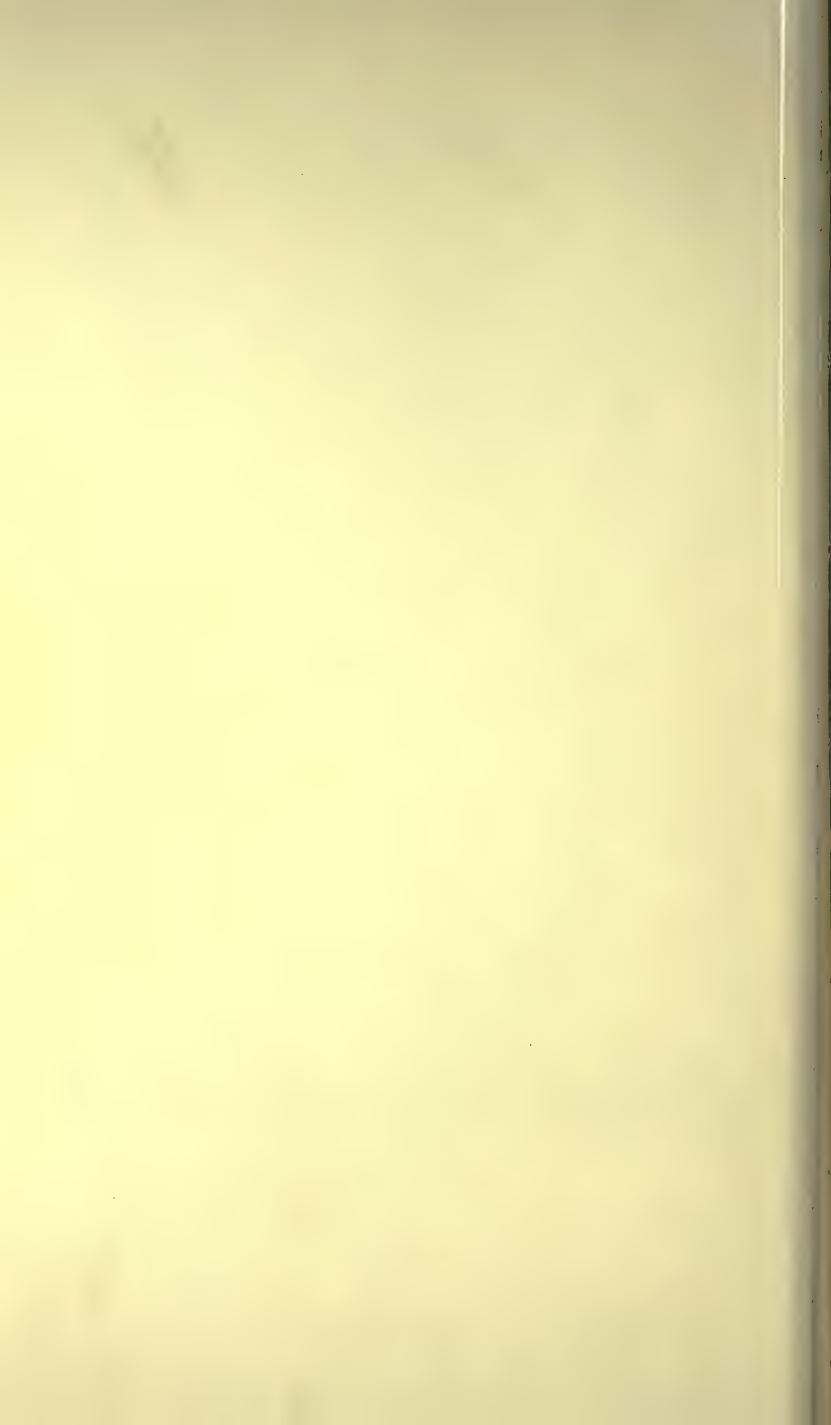
If we enter the house we shall find that, in spite of various changes, it is easy to trace the form of the rooms in which the Burneys lived. In some rooms, indeed, there is little or no change, and throughout the building we are able, with the help of their journals and letters, to reconstruct the family surroundings.

The first thing that strikes us is the fine old oaken staircase, and if we ascend the first flight of its shallow steps, we shall reach the drawing-room—a cheerful room whose three lofty, recessed windows overlook St. Martin's Street. We notice its carved wooden chimney-piece, in the Adam style of decoration, and its deep cornice beneath the ceiling. This ceiling, as Fanny tells us, was “prodigiously painted and ornamented,” but its glories, alas ! have long since vanished.

Folding-doors opened formerly into the



THE HOUSE IN ST. MARTIN'S STREET



The New Home

library, which led, and still leads, into a small narrow room known as "Sir Isaak Newton's Study." Here Dr. Burney kept his "chaos of materials" for his literary work. From the library window we see, on the right, the rounded windows of the Orange Street Chapel, and, on the left, the study windows, while below lies the narrow space of ground which used to be the garden.

The library served the Burneys for a music-room as well as a library. Here stood the two harpsichords upon which Hetty and her husband, Charles Rosseau Burney, played duets to the delight of their audiences. Here, too, the great singers of the day, just arrived from the Continent, hastened to display their powers before the celebrated author of the "History of Music."

On the second floor and above the library is the room in which Fanny and her sister Susan slept, while to the front is the best bedroom, with Dr. Burney's powdering-closet opening out of it.

On the ground-floor was the small dining, or living room, usually called "the parlour," whose form may still be traced in spite of various alterations. We still see its panelled walls, its two windows looking to the front, and its old-fashioned fireplace, and can fancy that Dr. Burney's bureau, which we know stood in this room, must have been placed in a deep recess between the fire-

The House in St. Martin's Street

place and one of the windows. We can also fancy the polished table in the centre of the room, upon which the family would take their meals. They drank tea here at seven o'clock, when many a friend would drop in, till the numbers sometimes swelled to quite a large gathering. Their supper was at eleven, "a meal which is an excuse with us," writes Fanny, "for chatting over baked apples." Only a chosen few of the company were invited to remain for this domestic meal.

Sometimes their more intimate visitors would make their appearance at an early hour in the morning, notably that admired and loved friend of the household, David Garrick. "One morning he called at eight o'clock," writes Fanny, "and, unfortunately, Susette and I were not come down stairs. We hurried in vain, for he discovered our laziness and made us monstrously ashamed by his raillery. 'I shall tell Mrs. Garrick,' said he, 'that I found the Doctor reading Petrarch, in flannel like a *young man*—but where, says I, where were the young ladies? Where do you think were *my* favorites? Why, *in bed!*'"

On another occasion "as he went out he said with a very comical face to me, 'I like you! I like you all! I like your looks! I like your manners!' And then, opening his arms with an air of heroics, he said, 'I am tempted to run away

The New Home

with you all, one after another !' We all longed to say, 'Pray do !' "

Sometimes the gentle Sir Joshua Reynolds, his painting hours over, would drop in from his house in Leicester Square, to enjoy the society of his friends in St. Martin's Street, or James Barry would hurry from his rooms near Oxford Market for the pleasure of a discussion with Mrs. Burney, "whose pride in reasoning lay," while occasionally the great Dr. Johnson, arriving from Bolt Court with his friend, blind Mrs. Williams, would make his appearance in the cheerful parlour for tea and talk.

It was an attractive household. "I love Burney," says Dr. Johnson ; "my heart goes out to meet him. I much question if there is in the world such another man as Dr. Burney." And the great Italian singer, Pacchierotti, exclaims, "Oh, how *agréable* they are ! I don't know anybody as *agréable* as—as Mr. Dr. Burney's family !"

CHAPTER II

A VERY PARTICULAR CORRESPONDENCE

THE family in St. Martin's Street consisted of Dr. Burney, his second wife (formerly a Mrs. Allen), his three daughters, Fanny, Susan, and Charlotte, and his and Mrs. Burney's little son Dick. His eldest son, James, was at sea, and therefore paid only occasional visits to the family home, although a small parlour, opening into the garden, always went by the name of "Jem's room." His second son, Charles, was at Cambridge.

Esther, his eldest daughter, had married her first cousin, Charles Rousseau Burney. They were living in Tavistock Street, Covent Garden, and near to them in York Street lived Dr. Burney's mother and his sisters "Aunt Becky" and "Aunt Anne."

A constant frequenter of the former homes of the Burney family had been Mr. Samuel Crisp (Fanny's beloved "Daddy Crisp"), the staunch friend and adviser of the whole household; one

A Very Particular Correspondence

whom Macaulay has described as "a scholar, a thinker, and an excellent counsellor." But Crisp had now retired to his remote country home in Surrey—Chesington Hall—where he lived a solitary life, shut out from all intercourse with the outer world, save and except only with the Burney family. It is to this circumstance that we owe the dramatic journal-letters, covering a period of several years, sent by Fanny to amuse him in his loneliness, and which called forth from him such original and racy replies.

In the autumn of 1773, Fanny writes : "I have now entered into a very particular correspondence with Mr. Crisp. I write really a Journal to him, and in answer he sends me most delightful, long, and incomparably clever letters, animadverting upon all the facts, etc., which I acquaint him with, and dealing with the utmost sincerity in stating his opinion and giving his advice. . . . He says more in three lines than I shall in a hundred while I live."

Here is a piece of Crisp's advice : "Let this declaration serve once for all, that there is no fault in an epistolary correspondence like stiffness and study. Dash away whatever comes uppermost ; the sudden sallies of imagination, clap'd down on paper, just as they arise, are worth folios, and have all the warmth and merit of that sort of nonsense that is eloquent in love."

The House in St. Martin's Street

Another time he remarks: "Your letter was an excellent one; but you are devilish long-winded, pray mend that fault."

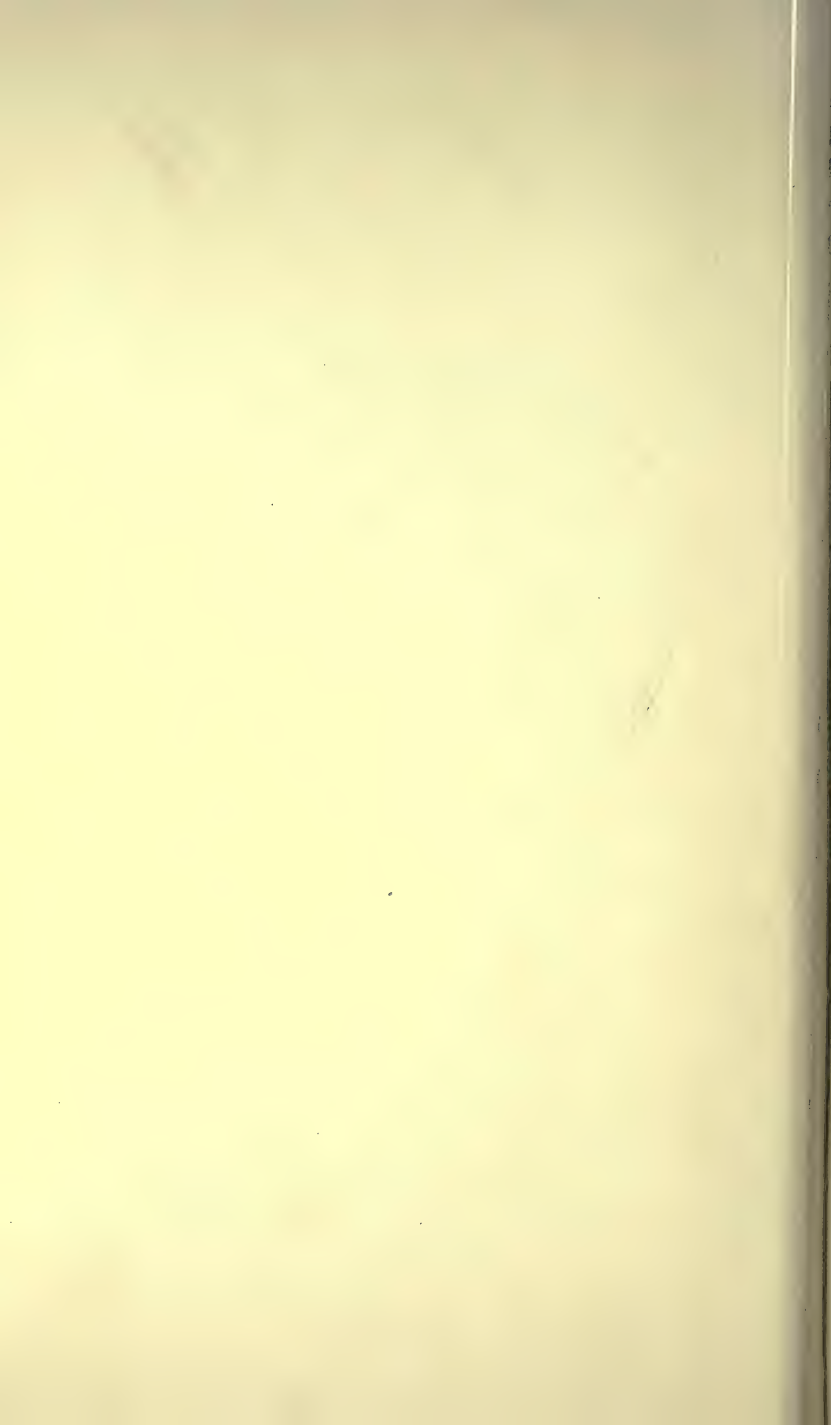
The strong language of Mr. Crisp belonged rather to the days of Queen Anne than to those of George III., but it proceeded from no coarseness of thought; indeed, he had a heart tender and refined as that of a woman, and he loved his "Fannikin" above all else in the world.

Fanny was small and slight of figure, and her health was often a source of anxiety to her friends. "What a slight piece of machinery is the terrestrial part of thee, our Fannikin!" he exclaims, "a mere nothing, a blast, a vapour disorders the spring of thy watch; and the mechanism is so frail that it requires no common hand to set it right again."

In one of her first letters to Crisp, written after the family had settled in St. Martin's Street, Fanny describes a visit they had just received from the Otaheitan Chief, Omai, the same man of whom the poet Cowper writes in the "Task," calling him "the gentle savage." Omai was at that moment "the lyon of lyons of the town," for being the first native who had ventured to come over to this country, he was received as a sort of representative of our discoveries in the South Seas, and was fêted everywhere. He came to St. Martin's Street at the invitation of James



FRANCES BURNEY



A Very Particular Correspondence

Burney, who was lieutenant on the man-of-war in which he had made his voyage to England, and with whom he had formed a friendship.

Fanny writes : " I have seen Omai, and if I am as I intend to be, very minute in my account, will you shake hands and be friends ?

" ' Yes, you little Devil you ! so *to business*, and no more words.' Very well, I obey.

" . . . Mr. Strange and Mr. Hayes, at their own motion, came to dinner to meet our guest. We did not dine till four. But Omai came at two, and Mr. Banks and Dr. Solander brought him, in order to make a short visit to my father. They were all just come from the House of Lords, where they had taken Omai to hear the King make his speech from the throne.

" For my part, I had been confined up stairs for three days ; however, I am much better, and obtained leave to come down, though very much wrapt up, and *quite a figure*, but I did not chuse to appear till Mr. Banks and Dr. Solander were gone. I found Omai seated in the great chair, and my brother next to him, and talking Otaheite as fast as possible. You cannot suppose how fluently and easily Jem speaks it. Mama and Susy and Charlotte were opposite. As soon as there was a cessation of talk, Jem introduced me, and told him I was another sister. He rose and made a very fine bow, and then seated himself

The House in St. Martin's Street

again. But when Jem went on and told him I was not well, he again directly rose, and muttering something about the *fire*, in a very polite *manner* insisted upon my taking his seat, and he *would* not be refused. He then drew his chair next to mine, and looking at me with an expression of pity, said, 'Very well *to-morrow-morrow*?' I imagine he meant, I hope you will be very well in *two or three morrows*, and when I shook my head, he said, '*No?* O, very bad!'

"As he had been at Court he was very fine. He had on a suit of Manchester velvet, lined with white satten, a *bag*, lace ruffles, and a very handsome sword which the King had given him. He is tall and very well made, much darker than I expected to see him, but has a pleasing countenance. . . . He seems to shame Education, for his manners are so extremely graceful, and he is so polite, attentive, and easy, that you would have thought he came from some foreign Court.

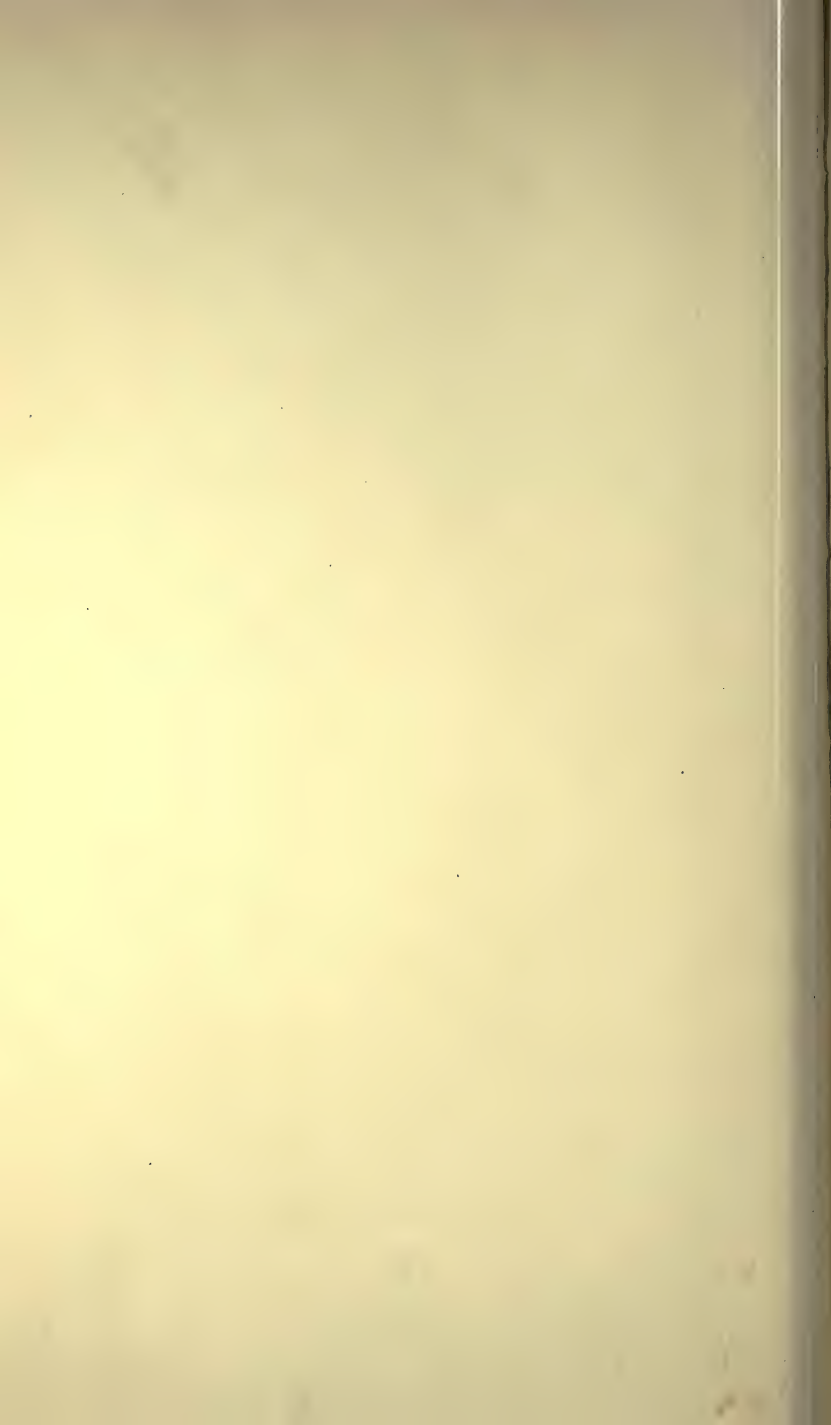
". . . At dinner I had the pleasure of sitting next to him. The moment he was helped he presented his plate to me, which, when I declined, he had not the *over-shot* politeness to offer *all round*, as I have seen some people do, but took it quietly again. He eat heartily and committed not the slightest blunder at table, neither did he do anything *awkwardly* or *ungainly*.

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THE DRAWING-ROOM.



A Very Particular Correspondence

"... Mr. Hayes asked him, through Jem, how he liked the King and his Speech. He had the politeness to try to answer in English and to Mr. Hayes, and said, '*Very well*, King George!'

"... Before six the coach came. Our man came in and said, 'Mr. Omai's servant.' He heard it at once, and answered, '*Very well*.' He kept his seat about five minutes after, then rose and got his hat and sword. My father happening to be talking to Mr. Strange, Omai stood still, neither chusing to interrupt him, nor to make his compliments to any body else first. When he was disengaged Omai went up to him, and made an exceeding fine bow—the same to Mama—then separately to every one in the company, and then went out with Jem to his coach.

"The conversation of our house has turned ever since upon Mr. *Stanhope* and *Omai*—the first with all the advantages of Lord Chesterfield's instructions, brought up at a great school, introduced at fifteen to a Court, taught all possible accomplishments from an infant, and having all the care, expense, labour and benefit of the best education that any man can receive, proved after it all, a mere *pedantic booby*; the second, with no tutor but Nature, changes, after he is grown up, his dress, his way of life, his diet, his country and his friends; and appears in a *new world* like a man [who] had all his life studied *the Graces*. . . .

The House in St. Martin's Street

I think this shows how much more *nature* can do without *art*, than *art* with all her refinement unassisted by *nature*."

This strange contrast was again suggested to Fanny's mind when Omai paid his second visit to England a year later. Writing to Mr. Crisp, she says :—

"Mr. Burney, Hetty and I took a walk in the Park on Sunday morning, where, among others, we saw the young and handsome Duchess of Devonshire, walking in such an undressed and slatternly manner as in former times Mrs. Rishton might have done in Chesington Garden. Two of her curls came quite unpinned, and fell lank on one of her shoulders; one shoe was down at heel, the trimming of her jacket and coat was in some places unsown; her cap was awry; and her cloak, which was rusty and powdered, was flung half on and half off. Had she not had a servant in a superb livery behind her, she would certainly have been affronted. Every creature turned back to stare at her. . . .

"Omai, who was in the Park, called here this morning, and says that he went to her Grace, and asked her why she let her hair go in that manner! Ha, ha, ha! Don't you laugh at her having a lesson of attention from an Otaheitan?"

CHAPTER III

RIVAL SINGERS

EARLY in 1775, Fanny writes to Mr. Crisp: "I am now going to give myself the delight of recounting an evening with the celebrated Signora Agujari; detta la *Bastardini*. . . . The visit had been some time arranged, and we expected her with extreme impatience. Dr. Maty, who is a little formal, affected man, but held in the highest class for learning, handed and presented Signora Agujari. She was accompanied by Signor Colla, an Italian musician, and the Rev^d. Mr. Penneck. She is of middle stature, and has the misfortune to be lame. . . . Her face is handsome and expressive of all her words. She has the character of being immensely proud. She was, however, all civility here, though her excessive *vanity* was perpetually self-betrayed. Signor Colla, to whom she is reported to be married, is a lively, I might almost say, fiery Italian.

". . . The conversation was chiefly in French.

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We were all languishing to hear Signora Agujari sing, though as it was not perfectly convenient to us to offer her fifty guineas for a song, we were somewhat in fear of requesting one. My father *hinted* it to Dr. Maty, Dr. Maty hinted it to Signor Colla; Signor Colla did not take the hint of hinting it to the Bastardini. He said that she certainly would sing to *the Doctor Burney*; but that she had a slight sore throat, and would wish to sing to *him* to the greatest advantage. He then launched into a most profuse panygyric of my father, of his fame abroad, and of the great happiness he had in being introduced to a so *célèbre homme*.

"We were all disappointed; but Signora Agujari promised to make us another visit very soon, when she would bring two of her most favourite airs with her. . . . She asked my father if he had heard *la Gabriella*?"

"'No,' he said; 'she was in Sicily when he visited Italy.'

"'Ah, Diable!' cried she, 'c'est dommage!'

"*Diable* is a favourite exclamation with her, though, in other respects, she is not at all masculine.

"'Mais vous, Mlle.,' said my father, 'l'avez-vous entendue?'

"'Oh, no!' returned she, and added that they two could never be in the same place together;

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and Signor Colla said, that two first singers could never meet. 'Two suns,' said Dr. Maty, in Italian, 'are never seen at once.'

"... My sister [Hetty] was asked by the company in general to play; she begged to be excused, being quite out of practice. However, the company would not accept of her excuses; and therefore she played a lesson of Bach of Berlin.

"The Bastardini seemed really pleased with it, and was civil in her commendations. Mr. Burney then sat down, and, as usual, raised a general astonishment, though I thought that the Bastardini seemed more pleased with Hetty's playing, which is infinitely expressive and full of taste.

"When they went away she again repeated '*Je veindrai* (sic) *absolument*,' and Dr. Maty esquired her to their carriage, adding she would only wait to be quite in voice."

The Bastardini kept her word. Fanny writes after the great event:—

"And now for the singer of singers! She came with Signor Maestro Colla to tea. She frightened us a little at first, by complaining of a cold. Mr. Burney, as usual, played first; and after that Signora Agujari rose to sing! We all rose too,—we seemed all Ear. Had a *pin* fallen, I suppose we should have taken it at least for a *thunder-clap*. All was hushed and rapt attention.

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"She began with a fulness and power of voice that astonished us beyond all our possible expectations. She then lowered it to the most expressive softness: in short, she was *sublime*; I can use no other word without degrading her.

"We wished for you, I cannot tell you how much we wished for you! The great singers of former years, whom I have heard you so emphatically describe, seem to have all their talents revived in this wonderful singer! I could compare her to nothing I ever *heard*, but only to what *you* have heard. Your Carestino—Farinelli—Senesino alone are worthy to be ranked with the Bastardini. Such a powerful voice!—so astonishing a compass, reaching from C in the middle of the harpsichord to *two* notes above the harpsichord! Every tone so clear, so full, so charming! Then her *shake*—so *plump*, so true, so open! It is as strong and distinct as Mr. Burney's upon the harpsichord. . . . She executes the greatest difficulties that are possible to be given her with all the ease and facility that I could say 'My dear daddy!'"

Mozart, who heard Agujari sing at Parma just five years before Fanny wrote these words, speaks, in a letter, of her "incredibly high range," and says "she sang the following notes and passages in my presence." Here follow



THE LIBRARY OR MUSIC-ROOM.



Rival Singers

several lines of music, of which these are the concluding bars:—



“Agujari came before 7,” continues Fanny, “and stayed till 12, and was singing all the time! . . . She sung in twenty different styles. The *greatest* was *son regina* and *son amante* from *Didone*. Good Heaven! what a song! and how sung! Then she gave us two or three *Cantabiles*, sung divinely, then she chaunted some Church music in a style so nobly simple and unadorned, that it stole into one’s very soul! Then she gave us a *bravura*, with difficulties which seemed only possible for an *instrument* in the hands of a great master; then she spoke some recitative, so nobly! In short, whether she most astonished or most delighted us, I cannot say, but she is really a *sublime* singer.”

A few months later Gabrielli arrived in London, and great were the expectations of the opera-going world. But Gabrielli was as famous for her caprice as for her voice. The Opera of *Didone* having been announced for a certain evening, the lady, instead of appearing on the scene when the day arrived, sent an excuse for

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her absence at the eleventh hour. "The crowd," writes Fanny, who was present, "was prodigious. People were in horrid passions. . . . One gentleman blustered furiously, vowing he had come twenty miles since dinner on purpose to hear Signora Gabrielli. Poor Yates, the manager, was obliged to stand at the door from 5 till past 7 o'clock to appease the rage of the disappointed public, though every person he sent away caused him a pang, as he could not but say, 'There goes three shillings!—there five!—there half-a-guinea!' Yet if he had not been there, the house would probably have been pulled down."

When Gabrielli was singing in Sicily a few years earlier, her caprices were dealt with in a summary fashion. For the King, being present at the performance of an opera in which she chose to sing in an almost inaudible voice, was so indignant that he had her clapped into prison!

The Burneys' second visit to the opera-house to hear Gabrielli sing was not paid in vain, as on this occasion the lady condescended to make her appearance.

Fanny, after giving a detailed account of her singing to Mr. Crisp, goes on to say: "I know not what to write. Opinions vary so much that I would, to Heaven, you would come and hear and judge for yourself. . . .

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“To tell you I was not disappointed is impossible. You must already have perceived that *your Tribunal* has pronounced well, for Agujari is still alone and unrivalled !

“Mr. Burney said he was prodigiously *let down* ; that she was not within ten degrees of Agujari. Hetty, because she was not an Agujari, would allow her *nothing* ; declared that she would not quit her room to hear her ; that she did not care whether she went to another opera the whole season. But Hetty’s warm admiration has been so won by Agujari that she looks upon Gabrielli as a sort of usurper, in coming upon a throne that ought to be sacred to its first Queen. . . . Susey was rather more pleased. For my part, though I by no means could compare her with Agujari, I thought the *tone* of her voice was extremely sweet. . . . My father, who has at once more *indulgence* and more judgement than any of us, came home in much better humour with her than his saucy children.

“She is the universal subject of conversation, and no two people think alike of her. In the gallery every one seemed to think that she gave herself airs and *would* not sing. In the pit, near my father, everybody was *delighted* with her. So you see you must come and hear her yourself.”

Crisp responds : “I am now convinc’d I had entertain’d a true and clear idea of Mrs. Gabriel,

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and form'd a just estimate of the comparative merits of her and Bastardini, for which I claim nothing to myself, but readily give it all to your faithful portraits of both. . . . I can not only excuse, but applaud Hetty, for her outrageous preference of Agujari, and I love Charles for being *prodigiously let down*.

"As for that Rogue, your father, I could lick him for his affected coolness and moderation. . . .

"But [for people] to tell one gravely that Gabriel has a very weak voice—or *a weak voice—but very sweet* and polish'd, etc., etc.! and then compare her to the Bastard, who, besides sweetness and taste, has all the powers of thunder and lightening in her, who can mark at pleasure every passage with what degree of strength and softness, light and shade, she pleases; who can strike you speechless with majesty, or melt you with tenderness in the change of a moment! I would recommend to such worthy judges, the sing-song and prettiness of Waller and Cowley, in preference to the sublimity of Milton and Homer."

It is interesting to turn from Crisp's shrewd criticism to David Garrick's judgment of Gabrielli's singing, given in an unpublished letter* to Dr. Burney. This letter was written in Naples on February 5, 1764, when Gabrielli's

* Burney MSS.

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‘youth, beauty and caprice had occasioned an universal delirium among her young countrymen.’ After remarking that the Italian music of that day was “all execution, without Simplicity or Pathos,” he goes on to say, “I have heard the famous Gabrielli, who has indeed astonishing powers, great compass of voice and great flexibility, but she is always y^e same, and though you are highly transported at first with her, yet wanting that nice feeling of y^e passions (without which everything in y^e dramatic way will cease to entertain) she cannot give that variety and that peculiar Pleasure which alone can support the tediousness of an Opera—in short, the Musick, vocal and instrumental, [here] has lost its nature, and it is all dancing on y^e slack rope, and tumbling through y^e hoop.”

Fanny gives a lively picture in the following journal-letter to Mr. Crisp of the excitement caused in St. Martin’s Street by the claims of the rival singers.

It appears that on a certain evening in November of the year we are writing of (1775), some notable guests were assembling in the Burneys’ drawing-room.

“I shall introduce them to you,” writes Fanny to Crisp, “as they entered.

“Rat, tat, tat! Enter the Dean of Winchester . . .

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"*Dr. Burney*: 'Was you at the Opera last night, Mr. Dean?'

"*Dean of W.*: 'No, Sir, I made an *attempt*, but *I* hate a crowd as much as the *ladies* love it. I beg pardon!' (Bowing to us.)

"Tat, tat, tat, tat, tat two! Enter Lady Edgecumbe. We were all introduced to her, and were honoured with a most gracious reception. She began a very animated conversation with my father, and was all condescension, *repartee*, (and yet) good humour.

"*Dr. Burney*: 'Your Ladyship was doubtless at the Opera last night?'

"*Lady Edge.*: 'O yes! But I have not *heard* the Gabrielli!—that is all I can say, I have not *heard* her! I won't allow that I have!'

"*Dr. B.*: 'Your Ladyship expected a greater and more powerful voice?'

"*Lady Edge.*: 'Why no, not much. . . . But for me—I have heard Monticelli—I have heard Mingotti—and I have heard Manzoli! and I shall never hear them again!'

"*Dr. King (pushing himself forward)*: 'But I humbly submit to your Ladyship, whether Gabrielli has yet done herself justice?' (N.B.—He knows, nor cares, a fig for music.)

"*Lady Edge.*: 'Certainly not. But, Dr. Burney, I *have* also heard Agujari—and I shall never hear *HER* again!'

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"*Hetty, Fanny, Susette* : ' O, Agujari !'

"*Dr. B.* : ' Your Ladyship wins all their hearts by naming Agujari. But I hope you *will* hear her again.'

"*Lady Edge.* : ' Do pray, Dr. Burney, speak about her to Mrs. Yates. Let her know that Agujari *wishes* to sing at the Theatre. . . . Agujari would greatly fill the Theatre—indeed she could fill the Pantheon. By Gabrielli, Rauzini seemed to have a great voice : by Agujari he appeared a child.'

" Tat, tat, tat ! Enter Mr. Charles Boone. Salutations over.

"*Dr. B.* : ' You were at the Opera last night ?'

"*Mr. Boone* : ' No, my cold was too bad. But I am told by Mr. Cooper, an excellent judge, that he had heard enough to pronounce Gabrielli the greatest singer in the world.'

" Tat, tat, tat, tat ! Enter Mr. and Mrs. Brudenal. Mr. Brudenal is second brother to the Duke of Montague. His lady was the Hon. Miss Legge, a great lady singer, and scholar of Mingotti. . . .

" The introduction over, the *Question of the Night* was repeated—How do you like Gabrielli ?

"*Mrs. Brudenal* : ' O, Lady Edgecumbe and I are exactly of one mind ; we both agree that she has not sung yet.'

" Tat, tat, tat ! Enter Mr. Chamier Mr.

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Chamier, who is the most gallant of men, immediately seated himself by Susette and me, and began a most lively and agreeable conversation; and from this time the company, being large, divided into parties. But I am resolved you shall hear every body's opinion of Gabrielli.

"*Mr. Chamier*: 'Well, ladies, I hope you were entertained at the Opera? I had the happiness of sitting next to Dr. Burney.'

"*Susy*: 'I believe I saw you.'

"*Mr. Chamier*: 'I was very sorry I could not see *you*. I looked for you.'

"*Fanny*: 'O, we were at a humble distance!—in the gallery.'

"*Mr. Chamier*: '. . . Was not the Gabrielli charming?'

"*Susy*: 'O, y—e—s.'

"*Fanny*: 'I never *expected* so much in my life. I was really in an agitation. I could not listen to the overture—I could hardly breath till I heard her.'

"*Mr. Chamier*: 'Well, I am sure she did not disappoint you!'

"*Fanny*: 'I must confess my expectations were too high raised to be answered.'

"*Mr. Chamier*: 'O, she was not in voice; you must regard this as a mere *échantillon*.'

"*Hetty*: 'A very feeble and bad one!' (N.B.—Between her teeth.)

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"*Mr. Chamier* : 'I was kept at the theatre a full hour after the last dance before I could get a chair, for the crowd. However, we got into a party in the Coffee-room, and settled the *affairs of the opera*.'

"*Fanny* : 'Then I am sure there could be no dearth of conversation, for the opinions of every one concerning Gabrielli are so various.'

"*Mr. Chamier* : 'O, I beg your pardon! I find it the *ton* to be dissatisfied, "*C'est peu de chose*" was echoed and re-echoed *partout*.'

In Fanny Burney's novel of "*Cecilia*," there is a certain Captain Aresby, of the Maccaroni type, whose style of conversation we think must have been suggested by that of Mr. Chamier. Here is a specimen of the Captain's talk :—

"What a concourse!" he cries, meeting Cecilia at Vauxhall. "Are you not *accablée*? for my part I hardly respire. I have really hardly ever had the honour of being so *obsédé* before. . . . *Assez de monde* but nobody here! a blank *partout*!"

Lady Edgecumbe, speaking of the Gabrielli, remarks: "The ceremony of her quitting the house when the Opera is over is extremely curious: First goes a man in a livery to clear the way; then follows the sister; then the Gabrielli herself; then a page to hold her train; and lastly, another man who carries her *muff*, in which is her little lap-dog."

CHAPTER IV

NOTABLE GUESTS

IN May, 1775, Fanny writes : " We have had a charming Concert. . . . The party consisted of the Baron Deiden, the Danish Ambassador, and the Baroness his lady, who is a sweet woman, young, pretty, accomplished and graceful. She is reckoned one of the best lady harpsichord players in Europe." After mentioning several other guests, Fanny goes on to speak of " Mr. Harris, author of the Three Treatises on Music, Poetry, and Happiness. He is at the same time," she says, " learned and polite, intelligent and humble. . . . Mr. Merlin, the very ingenious mechanic [who] is very diverting in conversation. He does not, though a foreigner, want *words* ; but he *arranges* and *pronounces* them very comically. . . .

" Mr. Jones, a Welsh harper, a silly young man, was also present. Mr. Jones began the Concert. He has a fine instrument of Merlin's construction ; he plays with great neatness and

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delicacy ; but as *expression* must have meaning, he does not abound in that commodity. After him, at the request of the Baroness Deiden, Mr. Burney went to the harpsichord. He played with his usual successful velocity, and his usual applause. When he had received the compliments of the nobility and gentry, my father begged the Baroness to take his place ; but she would not at first hear of it. She said in French, which she almost always speaks, that it was quite out of the question, and that it would be like a figurante's dancing after Heinel.* However . . . she was at length prevailed with. She has a great deal of execution and fire, and plays with much meaning. . . . Hetty was then pressed to perform. To avoid emulation she chose to play a slow movement of Echard's. . . . It is a lesson which is almost unequalled for taste, elegance and delicacy, and she played it with so much feeling and expression that the whole company listened with delighted attention. . . .

“After this we had a song from Miss Louisa Harris. She has little or no voice, but sings with great taste, and in a high style. . . . She said she had rather have sung at a theatre than before *such an audience*. . . .

“Then followed the *great Feast* of the night, which was Müthel's Duet for two harpsichords,

* A celebrated Flemish danseuse.

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by Mr. Burney and my sister. They played delightfully. It is impossible for admiration to exceed what the company in general expressed. . . . The charming Baroness spoke her approbation in the highest terms. Mr. Harris, and indeed everybody, appeared enchanted."

In the early spring of this same year of which we are writing (1775), the Burney family made the acquaintance of the traveller James Bruce, or, as Fanny calls him, "His Abyssinian Majesty." She describes the various meetings with him in her diaries of that date, but she also describes them in a letter to Mr. Crisp, of which the manuscript lies before us.

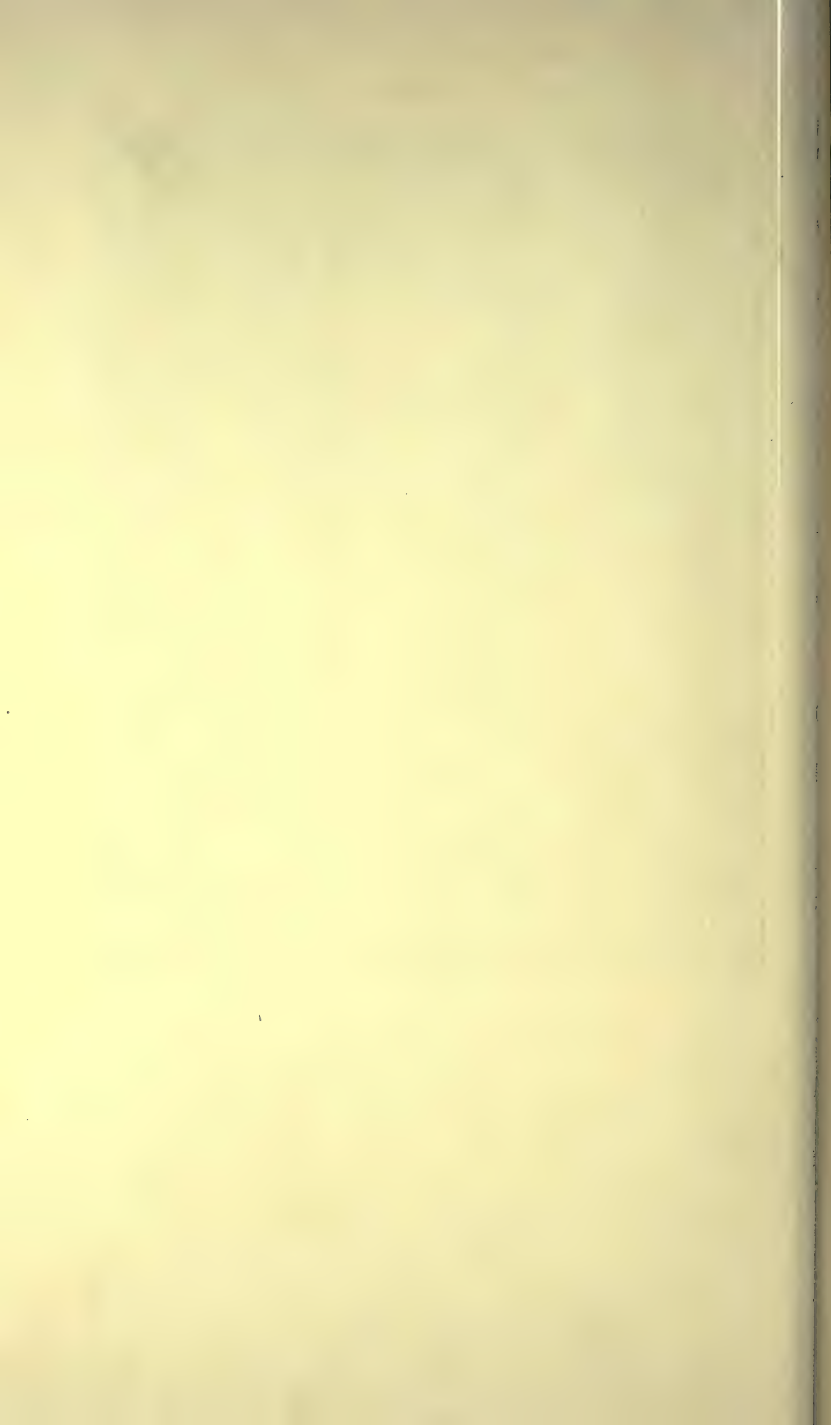
The letter is dated March 12th, and begins and ends with a short paragraph from the pen of Dr. Burney, who was busily engaged at that time in writing his "History of Music." The Doctor had been suffering from a temporary attack of rheumatism in his hands. "Fanny," he says, "desires me to write a prologue* to I know not what she's going to give you—and with my Paw, too! Not one strait finger have I in my right hand! However, I want to give you some signs of life after so long an absence and silence. . . . I have to tell you of my poor Book at a dead stop now—page 352. But what think you of the King of Abyssinia, who has at length indulged me with

* This "prologue" is given in the "Early Diaries."



Reynolds

DR BURNEY



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2 charming drawings of Instruments, an Abyssinian Lyre, now in common use, and the Theban harp, most beautiful indeed, though drawn from a painting in Diospolis at least 3000 years old. A letter of description too I have leave to print. God bless you."

In the first volume of the "History of Music" we find an engraving of this harp, which is of a graceful and elegant design.

Fanny, in continuance of the letter to Crisp, remarks: "I think that I can take no subject which will be so *agreeable* to you as Mr. Bruce, and therefore I will devote to him this letter."

She goes on to describe a meeting with him at the house of his friend Mrs. Strange, and speaks of the great traveller as "one of the haughtiest as well as the tallest of men." "The day following [our visit]," she says, "was fixed for this majestic man to come here.

"Mr. Twining, his wife, and a relation of hers, were of the party."

This Mr. Twining (known as "Aristotle Twining") was an intimate friend of the Burney family. Fanny speaks of him as "a man of learning, very fond of music, and a good performer both on the harpsichord and violin."

Mrs. and Miss Strange having arrived, "They

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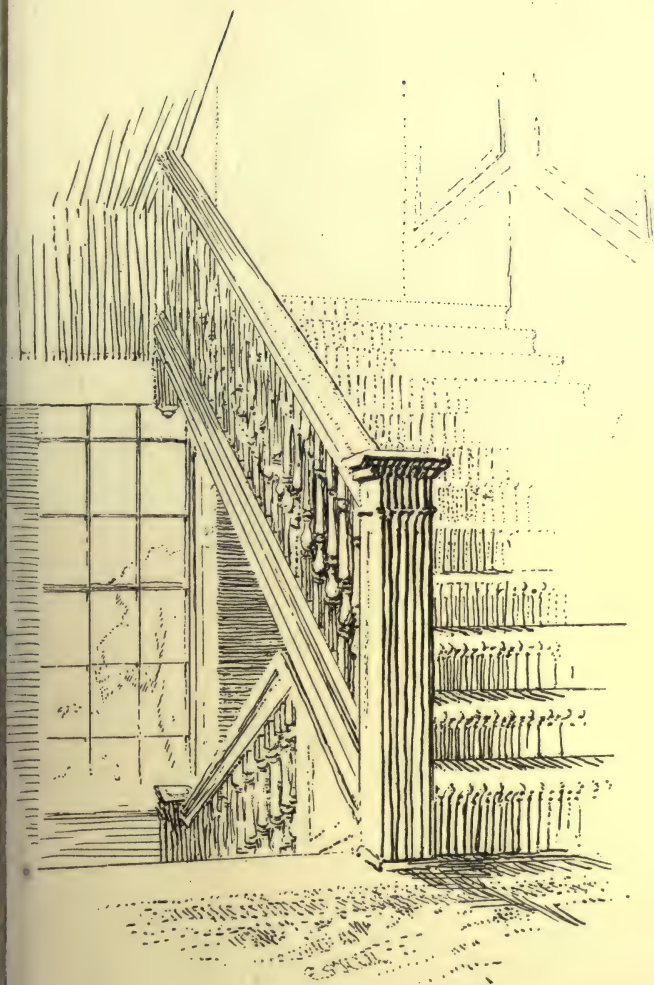
said that his Abyssinian Majesty dined with General Melville, and was to come as soon as possible. We waited tea an hour—but no Mr. Bruce! We then drank it, and Mr. Twining, impatient to hear Mr. Burney, proposed *going to work*, and went into the library where the Instruments* are. They were just got there when a thundering *rap* startled us. Mr. Bruce was announced, and he entered the room with the air, stalk and dignity of a Monarch.

“We soon found that he was out of humour, that something had disconcerted him. He drank one dish of tea, and then desired to speak to my Father, who asked him into his study, which is a little *snug* room through the Library. As they went out they *rencontred* Mr. Twining. My Father introduced him to the King of Abyssinia, who bowed, and then they went on. When the door was shut, Mr. Twining, advancing to Mrs. Strange and my mother, with uplifted hands and eyes, said, ‘This is the most awful man I ever saw! I never felt so little in my life!’

“‘Well, troth,’ said Mrs. Strange, ‘never mind. If you were six feet high, he would overlook you, and he can do no more now.’

“When Mr. Twining sat down, he said, in

* These “Instruments” are sometimes called Harpsichords sometimes Piano Fortes, in these journals.



THE STAIRCASE.



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a pretended fright, 'When he returns, if he should over-look me! if he should think the chair empty! I shall be crushed; it will be all over with me!'

"Mr. Twining again begged Mr. Burney not to wait longer [for the music], and so we all went into the Library, and Mr. B. sat down to the harpsichord and fired away in a voluntary. Mr. Twining, charmed with his performance, exclaimed, drolly, 'Is not this better than being tall?' Mr. Bruce and my Father soon returned, and we had music for above 2 hours. Mr. Burney played delightfully, and Hetty accompanied him in a very fine Duet for the Harpsichord and Piano Forte.

"Mr. Twining was enraptured; Mrs. Strange listened in silent wonder and pleasure; and Mr. Bruce was drawn into a charmed attention—his features relaxed into smiles, his air lost its fierceness; and good humour, satisfaction and complacency took place of pride, sternness and displeasure."

Another notable guest in the house in St. Martin's Street at this time was Prince Orloff, the favourite of the Empress Catherine of Russia, who made his appearance in the modest parlour blazing with diamonds. It was the fame of the "matrimonial duets," it seems, that had brought him there; for having heard them extolled by a

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mutual acquaintance—Dr. King—he had petitioned Dr. Burney to allow him to hear a performance. Dr. Burney could not well refuse to grant this favour to a man who was being fêted, at that very time, at King George's Court; but his was a strange presence in the Burney household. As he stalked about the rooms, his head towering above the other guests (for he was as tall as Mr. Bruce), he was looked upon with some feelings of dread, as well as of astonishment, for a sinister rumour was afloat that his jewelled hands, now clasping those of his kindly hosts, had actually helped to strangle the late unhappy Emperor. His manners, however, were perfectly courteous. He was loud in his applause of the duets; and a Russian nobleman who accompanied him, clapping his snuffbox with great vehemence, exclaimed, "*Dis is so pretty as ever I heard in my life.*"

The narrow thoroughfare of St. Martin's Street must have been thronged during these receptions with stately coaches, sedan-chairs, liveried servants, and link boys with their flaming torches. On one occasion a distinguished guest, M. le Comte de Guignes, the French Ambassador, "left," says Fanny, "an amusing laugh behind him from the pomposity of his exit. For not finding, upon quitting the music-room, with an abrupt *French leave*, half a

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dozen of our lackeys waiting to anticipate his orders, he indignantly and impatiently called out aloud, '*Mes geus ! où sont mes geus ? Que sont ils donc devenus ? Mes geus ! Je dis ! Mes geus !*'"



CHAPTER V

A GREAT ACTOR

WE find an amusing account of one of Garrick's visits to St. Martin's Street in Fanny Burney's "Memoir" of her father.

"A new housemaid," she writes, "who was washing the steps of the door and did not know him, offered some resistance to letting him enter the house unannounced; but breaking through her obstruction he . . . ascended the stairs and rushed into the Doctor's study; where his voice in some mock heroics to the damsel, alone preceded him.

"Here he found the Doctor immersed in papers, manuscripts and books, though under the hands of his hair-dresser; while one of his daughters was reading a newspaper to him; another was making his tea, and another was arranging his books." When the Doctor apologized for the littered state of his apartment, and endeavoured to put matters straight, Garrick, throwing himself into a chair, "called out, 'Ay, do

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now, Doctor, be in a little confusion! whisk your matters all out of their places; and don't know where to find a thing that you want for the rest of the day;—and that will make us all comfortable!’

“The Doctor laughingly . . . resumed his place on the stool, that the furniture of his head might go through its proper repairs.

“Mr. Garrick then, assuming a solemn gravity, with a profound air of attention, fastened his eyes upon the hair-dresser, as if wonder-struck at his amazing skill.

“The man, highly gratified by such notice from the celebrated Garrick, briskly worked on, frizzing, curling, powdering, and pasting with assiduous, though flurried importance, and with marked self-complacency.

“Mr. Garrick . . . seemed wholly absorbed in admiring watchfulness . . . putting on, by degrees, with a power like transformation, a little mean face of envy and sadness, such as he wore in ‘Abel Drugger’;* . . . for, with his mouth hanging stupidly open, he fixed his features in so vacant an absence of all expression, that he less resembled himself than some daubed wooden block in a barber’s shop window.

“The friseur . . . became utterly discountenanced by so incomprehensible a change, and . . .

* A character in Ben Jonson’s *Alchemist*.

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hardly knew what he was about. Mr. Garrick then, suddenly starting up, perked his altered physiognomy, with the look of a gaping idiot, full in the man's face.

"Scared and confounded, the perruquier now turned away his eyes and hastily rolled up two curls, with all the speed in his power, to make his retreat. But before he was suffered to escape, Mr. Garrick, lifting his own miserable scratch [wig] from his head, and perching it high up in the air upon his finger and thumb, dolorously, in a whining voice, squeaked out, 'Pray now, Sir, do you think, Sir, you could touch up this here old bob a little bit, Sir?'

"The man now, with open eyes and a broad grin, scampered pell-mell out of the room; hardly able to shut the door ere an uncontrollable horse laugh proclaimed his . . . perception of Mr. Garrick's mystification."

Fanny, who saw Garrick in the character of 'Abel Drugger' in 1773, wrote, on her return home from the theatre: "Never could I have imagined such a metamorphose as I saw; the extreme meanness, the vulgarity, the low wit, the vacancy of countenance, the appearance of *unlicked nature* in all his motions. In short, never was character so well entered into, yet so opposite to his own."

There is a story told of a person who had received a letter of introduction to the great



T. Gainsborough

DAVID GARRICK



A Great Actor

actor, and who happened to see him for the first time at the theatre in this character, exclaiming that "now he had seen what a mean-looking creature Garrick was he should not present his letter."

Garrick's power of changing his whole physiognomy was indeed marvellous. On one occasion, when he was sitting for his portrait to a very indifferent painter, he took it into his head to play the artist a trick. After the picture had progressed for some time, Garrick caught an opportunity when he was unobserved to change his whole countenance and expression. The artist, thinking that his own likeness must have been at fault, began laboriously to repaint the face on his canvas; but no sooner was this effected than Garrick seized another opportunity to change his countenance a second time, to one of a totally different character. The distracted painter now threw down his pallet and brushes, exclaiming that he must have been painting the devil, and would touch his picture no more.

This anecdote was told by Garrick himself to Sir Joshua Reynolds.

Garrick was passionately fond of children. In the old days, when the Burneys lived in Poland Street, he would often appear suddenly amongst them, and, if the Doctor happened to be out, would stay and amuse the little tribe of boys and

The House in St. Martin's Street

girls, assuming all kinds of characters for their entertainment.

In, an unpublished letter of Dr. Burney's,* he says: "Garrick used to take off the old puppet show of Punch, placing himself against a wall, seeming to speak through a comb, and to be moved by wires. Nobody talked such pretty nonsense as our great Roscius to children and lap-dogs."

In an early diary Fanny writes: "Yesterday after tea, we were cheered indeed; for *rap-tap-tap-tap*, and entered Mr. and Mrs. Garrick with their two nieces. Mr. Garrick, who has lately been very ill, is delightfully recovered, looks as handsome as ever I saw him, is in charming spirits, and was all animation and good humour.

"I never saw in my life," she says, "such brilliant piercing eyes as Mr. Garrick's are. In looking at him when I have chanced to meet them, I have really not been able to bear their lustre."

Another contemporary, also a young lady, speaks of his "brilliant full black eyes," and says his face was "alive in every muscle and feature."

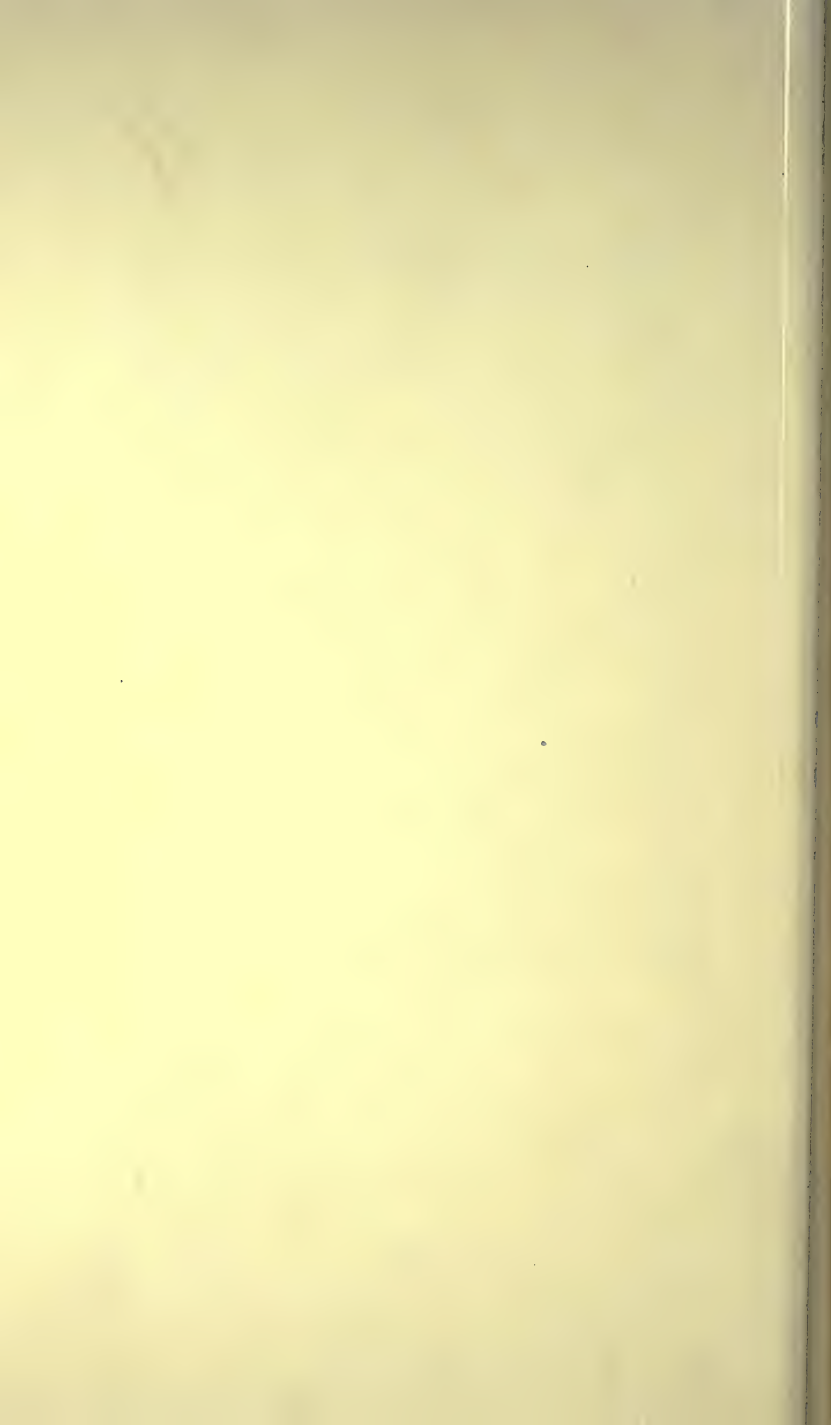
Speaking of Mrs. Garrick, Fanny remarks: "Her manners [are] all elegance; her smiles all sweetness. There is something so perfectly graceful in her motion and pleasing in her

* Burney MSS.



Cath. Read

MRS. GARRICK



A Great Actor

address, that the most trifling words have weight and power when spoken by her, to oblige and even delight."

Mrs. Garrick, who had formerly been an accomplished danseuse on the Austrian stage, seems always to have retained her grace of motion. She passed many years in England, but spoke our language at all times as a foreigner. Meeting Fanny one day, she addressed her as her "*tear little spark*," and explained her meaning by adding, "Your father is my *flame* all my life, and you are a little *spark* of that flame."

Many a delightful visit to the theatre the young Burneys owed to the kindness of Garrick or to that of his charming wife. On one occasion, when Dr. Burney had modestly asked for two places in some less-favoured part of the house, Garrick immediately responded—

"MY DEAR DR.,

"I would rather have your family in my box, than all the Lords and Commons.

"Yours ever,

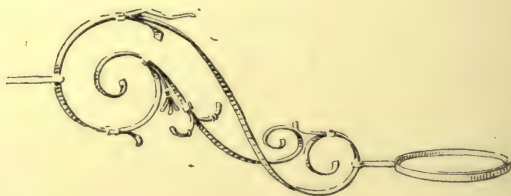
"D. G."

In May, 1772, Fanny writes: "Maria [Allen], Susan and myself had the happiness to see Garrick last night in *Richard III*. We had always longed to see him in all his great

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characters, though least in this, which is so shocking. Garrick was sublimely horrible! Good heavens! how he made me shudder whenever he appeared! It is inconceivable how terribly great he is in this character! I will never see him so disfigured again; he seemed so truly the monster he performed that I felt myself glow with indignation every time I saw him."

It is said that Hogarth saw Garrick in *Richard III.*, and, on the following night, saw him in 'Abel Druggier.' He was so struck that he said to him, "You are in your element when you are begrimed with dirt or up to your elbows in blood." Pope also saw Garrick, many years earlier, in *Richard III.*, and remarked to a friend, "That young man never had his equal, and he will never have a rival."



CHAPTER VI

A PERSISTENT LOVER

FANNY BURNEY writes in her journal on May 8, 1775: "This month is called a *tender* one. It has proved so *to* me—but not *in* me. I have not breathed one sigh,—felt one sensation,—or uttered one folly the more for the softness of the season. However, I have met with a youth whose heart, if he is to be credited, has been less guarded—indeed, it has yielded itself so suddenly, that had it been in any other month, I should not have known how to have accounted for so easy a conquest.

"The first day of this month I drank tea and spent the evening at Mr. Burney's, at the request of my sister, to meet a very stupid family, which she told me it would be a charity to herself to give my time to. This family consisted of Mrs. O'Connor and her daughter by a first marriage, Miss Dickinson, who, poor creature, has the misfortune to be deaf and dumb. They are very old acquaintances of my grandmother Burney, to

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oblige whom my sister invited them. My grandmother and two aunts, therefore, were of the party, as was also Mr. Barlow, a young man who has lived and boarded with Mrs. O'Connor for about two years.

“Mr. Barlow is rather short, but handsome. He is a very well-bred . . . good-tempered and sensible young man . . . and he is highly spoken of for disposition and morals. He has read more than he has conversed, and seems to know but little of the world ; his language, therefore, is stiff and uncommon, and seems laboured, if not affected—he has a great desire to please, but no elegance of manners ; neither, though he may be very worthy, is he at all agreeable.

“Unfortunately, however, he happened to be prodigiously civil to me. . . . As my sister knew not well how to *wile away the time*, I proposed, after supper, a round of cross questions. This was agreed to. Mr. Barlow, who sat next to me, took near half an hour to settle upon what he should ask me, and at last his question was, ‘What I thought most necessary in Love?’ I answered, ‘*Constancy*.’ I hope, for his own sake, he will not remember this answer long, though he readily subscribed to it at the time.

“The coach came for me about eleven. I rose to go. He earnestly entreated me to stay one or two minutes. I did not, however, think

A Persistent Lover

such compliance at all requisite. . . . The party then broke up. When we had all taken leave of our host and hostess, my grandmother, according to custom, gave me a kiss and her blessing. I would fain have eluded my aunts, as nothing can be so disagreeable as kissing before young men ; however, they chose it should go round ; and after them Mrs. O'Connor also saluted me, as did her daughter, desiring to be better acquainted with me. This disagreeable ceremony over, Mr. Barlow came up to me, and making an apology, which, not suspecting his intention, I did not understand—he gave me a most ardent salute ! I have seldom been more surprised. . . . I wonder so *modest a man* could dare be so bold.

“ He came downstairs with us, and waited at the door, I believe, till the coach was out of sight.

“ Four days after this meeting, my mother and Mrs. Young happened to be in the parlour, when I received a letter which, from the strong resemblance of the handwriting in the direction to that of Mr. Crisp, I immediately opened and thought came from Chesington ; but what was my surprise to see ‘ Madam ’ at the beginning, and at the conclusion,—‘ Your sincere admirer and very humble ser^t Thos. Barlow.’

“ I read it three or four times before I could credit my eyes. An acquaintance so short, and a procedure so hasty astonished me.”

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The following extract from this love-letter, which contains not a single full stop from beginning to end, will be sufficient, we think, for the patience of the reader :—

“ Mad^m,—Uninterrupted happiness we are told is of a short duration, and is quickly succeeded by Anxiety, which moral Axiom I really experienced on the Conclusion of May day at Mr. Charles Burney's, as the singular Pleasure of your Company was so soon Eclips'd by the rapidity of ever-flying Time; but the felicity, tho' short, was too great to keep within the limits of one Breast, I must therefore entreat your Pardon for the Liberty I take, in attempting to reiterate the satisfaction I then felt, and paying a Tythe of Justice to the amiable Lady from whom it proceeded . . . Language cannot possibly depict the soft Emotions of a mind captivated by so much Merit, and [I] have now a Contest between my ardent Pen, stimulated by so pleasing and so just a subject on the one hand, and a dread of being accused of Adulation on the other; however, endeavouring at Justice, and taking Truth (in her plainest Attire) for my Guide, I will venture to declare, that the Affability, Sweetness, and Sensibility, which shone in your every Action, lead me irresistably to Love and Admire the Mistress of them,” etc.

“ I took not a moment,” writes Fanny, “ to

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deliberate — I felt that my heart was totally insensible—and I felt that I could never consent to unite myself to a man who I did not *very* highly value.”

Her impulse was to send at once such a letter to Mr. Barlow as would put a stop to any further applications on his part. But before doing this she felt bound to consult her father on the subject. Her father was, as she expresses it, all “indulgence and goodness,” but he advised her not to answer Mr. Barlow’s letter; advice which went sorely against the grain with her. “I shewed Hetty the letter next day,” she continues, “and she most vehemently took the young man’s part.

“. . . I went afterwards to call on my grandmother; my sister followed me, and directly told her and my aunts of the affair. They all of them became most zealous advocates of Mr. Barlow. . . . And my aunt Anne humourously bid me beware of her and Becky’s fate!

“I assured them I was not intimidated, and that I had rather a thousand times die an old maid than be married, except from affection.”

Poor Fanny had to listen to yet further arguments in favour of her suitor, till at last her trials culminated in a letter from her Daddy Crisp urging her to reconsider her decision. “Look round, Fan!” he exclaims; “look at your aunts! *Fanny Burney* won’t always be what she is now.

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. . . Oh, Fan, this is not a marrying age, without a handsome fortune! . . . Suppose you to lose your father;—take in all chances. Consider the situation of an unprotected, unprovided woman! Excuse my being so earnest with you. Assure yourself it proceeds from my regard, and from (let me say it though it savors of vanity) a deep knowledge of the world.”

Fanny responds: “Forgive me, dearest Mr. Crisp—forgive me—but, indeed, I cannot act from *worldly motives*. You know and have long known and laughed at my notions and character: continue still to *laugh* at me—but pray don’t make *me* cry—for your last letter really made me unhappy. . . . I heartily wish I *could* act by your advice, and that I could return an attachment which, strange as it appears to me, I so little deserve. After all, if I live to be some comfort (as I flatter myself I am) to my father, I can have no motive to wish to sign myself other than his and your ever obliged, affectionate, and devoted,

“FRANCES BURNEY, to the end

“of the chapter. Amen.”

In all Fanny’s letters of this period relating to Mr. Barlow’s offer she signs her surname, “*writ large*,” and twice or thrice underlined, to show that it would, at least, never be changed to “Barlow.”

A Persistent Lover

On May 15th she writes in her journal : " This morning while we were all at breakfast except my father, who was in the study, John came into the parlour and said that a gentleman enquired for me. . . . The door opened and Mr. Barlow appeared. He had dressed himself elegantly, but



THE DINING-PARLOUR.

could hardly speak. He bowed two or three times—I coloured like scarlet. . . . He stammered a few words, but could not get on till Susan kindly came to the rescue and maintained some sort of conversation. I sat upon thorns from the fear that he would desire to speak to me alone. I looked another way and hardly opened my mouth. In about half an hour he rose to go. . . .

The House in St. Martin's Street

"Had I sent an answer [to his letter] this would not have happened, but it is now too late."

A chance meeting (to Fanny's no small annoyance) followed shortly afterwards, at the house of her grandmother and aunts, where Mr. Barlow endeavoured to press his suit, and where she did all in her power to repulse him. But this persistent lover seemed to be proof against all opposition, and upon quitting the lady's presence he addressed a second letter to her, in which, through the aid of "that powerful Deity Cupid," he made it evident that his hopes of success were gaining ground.

This letter was followed in its turn by a second call in St. Martin's Street, the result of which is given by Fanny in an unpublished letter* to her Daddy Crisp, who had now happily begun to see the matter in a new light. That letter, which is dated June 10, 1775, lies before us. It is written on sheets of square paper, now turned yellow with age. The handwriting is unusually large and clear.

"I shall not trouble you," she says, "with our conversation, which you may easily suppose. I desired to put a final end to the affair, and told [Mr. Barlow] I was unalterably fixed in the answer I gave him. He stayed, I dare say, 2

* Burney MSS.

A Persistent Lover

full hours—repeating, and making me repeat, the same things a thousand times. . . .

“I was never more happy than when he left the house. The conversation had been extremely disagreeable to me. However, I looked upon the whole business to be then entirely over, and as to Mr. B., though his melancholick and disconsolate looks rather distressed me, yet I felt sure that he would very soon forget an attachment he had formed so lightly ; and besides men soon console themselves.

“But what was my consternation when, the next morning, my dear father spoke to me in favour of this man ! He desired me not to be precipitate, and to keep an *opening* in case future enquiries should turn out to the advantage of Mr. Barlow.

“I was never on my *own* account so miserable in my life. I could not endure the idea of *trifling*—of seeming not to know my own mind—nor of waiting, like a mercenary Minx, to hear whether I should be the better for the alliance before I let him know whether I deign to accept him or not ! . . . and I felt that to be united for ever to a man for whom I had not the least regard, would cloud every Hour of my future Life.”

“That evening, however,” she writes in one of her published diaries, “I was relieved from my frights by my father’s kindness.

The House in St. Martin's Street

"After supper I went into the study, while my dear father was alone, to wish him good night, which I did as cheerfully as I could, though pretty evidently in dreadful uneasiness. When I had got to the door he called me back, and asked some questions concerning a new court-mourning, kindly saying he would assist Susette and me in our fitting out, which he accordingly did, and affectionately embraced me, saying, 'I wish I could do more for thee, Fanny!' 'Oh, Sir,' cried I, '*I* wish for nothing! only let me live with you.' 'My life!' cried he, kissing me kindly, 'thou shalt live with me for ever if thou wilt! Thou canst not think I meant to get rid of thee?'

"I could not, Sir; I could not!' cried I; 'I could not outlive such a thought!' and, as I kissed him—Oh! how gratefully and thankfully! with what a relief to my heart!—I saw his eyes full of tears, a mark of his tenderness which I shall never forget! 'God knows,' continued he, 'I wish not to part with my girls!—only don't be too hasty!'

"Thus relieved, restored to future hopes, I went to bed, light, happy, and thankful, as if escaped from destruction.

"From that day to this," she concludes, "my father, I thank Heaven, has never again mentioned Mr. Barlow."

CHAPTER VII

LEXIPHANES IN ST. MARTIN'S STREET

FANNY writes to Mr. Crisp on March, 28, 1777 : *
“ Now to our Thursday morning party.

“ Mrs. and Miss Thrale, Miss Owen, and Mr. Seward came long before Lexiphanes. Mrs. Thrale is a very pretty woman still ; she is extremely lively and chatty ; has no supercilious or pedantic airs, and is really gay and agreeable. Her daughter is about twelve years old . . . Miss Owen, who is a relative, is good-humoured and *sensible enough* . . . Mr. Seward is a very polite, agreeable young man.

“ My sister Burney was invited to meet and play to them. The conversation was supported with a good deal of vivacity (N.B.—my father being at home) for about half an hour, and then Hetty and *Susette*, for [*Susette's*] first time in *public*, played a duet ; and in the midst of their performance Dr. Johnson was announced. He

* This letter is docketted by Madame d'Arblay in later years, “ First sight of Dr. Johnson, Mrs. and Miss Thrale, and Mr. Seward.”

The House in St. Martin's Street

is indeed very ill-favoured; is tall and stout; but stoops terribly; he is almost bent double. His mouth is almost constantly opening and shutting as if he was chewing. He has a strange method of frequently twirling his fingers, and twisting his hands. His body is in continual agitation, *see-sawing* up and down; his feet are never a moment quiet; and, in short, his whole person is in *perpetual motion*. His dress, too, considering the times, and that he had meant to put on his *best becomes*, being engaged to dine in a large company, was as much out of the common as his figure; he had a large wig, snuff-colour coat, and gold buttons, but no ruffles to his [shirt] . . . and black worsted stockings."

It is curious to turn here to Dr. Johnson's own opinion of his appearance expressed to Fanny, a few years later, when he found her one day in the Thrales' drawing-room, gazing affectionately at his portrait. Peeping over her shoulder, he called out, with a ludicrous half-laugh, "Ah ha!—Sam Johnson!—I see thee!—and an ugly dog thou art!"

"He is shockingly near-sighted," continues Fanny, "and did not, till she held out her hand to him, even know Mrs. Thrale. He *poked his nose* over the keys of the harpsichord,* till poor

* This account is quoted chiefly from the "Memoir" of Dr. Burney.

Lexiphanes in St. Martin's Street

Hetty and Susan hardly knew how to play on, for fear of touching his phiz; or, which was harder still, how to keep their countenances. . . . When the duet was finished, my father introduced your Hettina to him as an old acquaintance, to whom, when she was a little girl, he had presented his 'Idler.'

"His answer to this was imprinting on her pretty face—not a half-touch of a courtly salute—but a good, real, substantial, and very loud kiss.

"Everybody was obliged to stroke their chins, that they might hide their mouths.

". . . His attention was not to be drawn off two minutes longer from the books, to which he now strided his way. He pored over them shelf by shelf, almost brushing them with his eye-lashes. . . . At last, fixing upon something that happened to hit his fancy, he took it down, and standing aloof from the company, which he seemed clean and clear to forget, he began without further ceremony and very composedly to read to himself, and as intently as if he had been alone in his own study.

"We were all excessively provoked, for we were languishing, fretting, expiring to hear him talk—not to see him read!—what could that do for us?

"My sister then played another duet accompanied by my father, to which Mrs. Thrale seemed

The House in St. Martin's Street

very attentive, and all the rest quietly resigned. But Dr. Johnson had opened a volume of the 'British Encyclopedia,' and was so deeply engaged, that the music, probably, never reached his ears.

"When it was over, Mrs. Thrale, in a laughing manner, said, 'Pray, Dr. Burney, will you be so good as to tell me what that song was, and whose, which Savoi sung last night at Bach's* concert, and which you did not hear?'

"My father confessed himself by no means so able a diviner, not having had time to consult the stars, though he lived in the house of Sir Isaak Newton. But anxious to draw Dr. Johnson into conversation, he ventured to interrupt him with Mrs. Thrale's conjuring request relative to Bach's concert.

"The doctor comprehending his drift, good-naturedly put away his book, and, see-sawing, with a very humorous smile, drolly repeated, 'Bach, sir? Bach's concert? And pray, sir, who is Bach? Is he a piper?'

"You may imagine what exclamations followed such a question.

"Mrs. Thrale gave a detailed account of the nature of the concert, and the fame of Mr. Bach, and the many charming performances she had heard, with all their varieties, in his rooms.

* J. C. Bach, a son of Johann Sebastian Bach.

Lexiphanes in St. Martin's Street

“When there was a pause, ‘Pray, madam,’ said he, with the calmest gravity, ‘what is the expense for all this?’”



LEICESTER SQUARE IN THE 18TH CENTURY.

“‘O,’ answered she, ‘the expense is—much trouble and solicitation to obtain a subscriber’s ticket—or else half-a-guinea.’”

The House in St. Martin's Street

“ ‘Trouble and solicitation,’ he replied, ‘I will have nothing to do with!—but, if he be so fine,—I will be willing to give’—he hesitated, and then finished with—‘eighteen pence.’

“Ha! ha! Chocolate being then brought, we returned to the drawing-room; and Dr. Johnson, when drawn away from the books, freely and with social good-humour gave himself up to conversation. . . . They talked of Mr. Garrick and his late exhibition before the King, to whom and to the Queen and Royal Family he read [his farce of] “*Lethe*,” in character, *c’est à dire*, in different voices, and theatrically. . . .

“ ‘They say,’ cried Mrs. Thrale, ‘that Garrick was extremely hurt at the coolness of the King’s applause, and did not find his reception such as he expected.’

“ ‘He has been so long accustomed,’ said Mr. Seward, ‘to the thundering approbation of the theatre, that a mere “*Very well*” must necessarily and naturally disappoint him.’

“ ‘Sir,’ said Dr. Johnson, ‘he should not, in a Royal apartment, expect the hallooing and clamour of the One Shilling Gallery. . . . He has long reigned the unequalled favourite of the public, and, therefore, nobody will mourn his hard lot if the King and Royal Family were not transported into rapture upon hearing him read *Lethe*. But yet Mr. Garrick will complain to his friends;

Lexiphanes in St. Martin's Street

and his friends will lament the King's want of feeling and taste; and then Mr. Garrick will kindly *excuse* the King. He will say that His Majesty might be thinking of something else; that the affairs of America might occur to him; or some subject of State more important, perhaps, than *Lethe*; but though he will say this himself, he will not forgive his friends if they do not contradict him!

"Garrick" [remarked the Doctor, presently] "never enters a room but he regards himself as the object of general attention, from whom the entertainment of the company is expected; and true it is that he seldom disappoints that expectation: for he has infinite humour, a very just proportion of wit, and more convivial pleasantry than almost any man living. But then *off* as well as *on* the Stage, he is always an Actor! for he holds it so incumbent upon him to be sportive, that his gaiety becomes mechanical from being habitual."

Johnson's words recall the well-known description of Garrick in Goldsmith's "Retaliation"—

"On the stage he was natural, simple, affecting;
'Twas only that when he was off he was acting."

But Johnson had a high opinion of Garrick's character in spite of his criticisms. "Garrick," said he, "is accused of vanity; but few men

The House in St. Martin's Street

would have borne such unremitting prosperity with greater, if with equal moderation."

Sir Joshua Reynolds once observed of Dr. Johnson that he considered this great actor, who had formerly been his pupil, "to be, as it were, his *property*, and that he would allow no man either to blame or to praise Garrick in his presence without contradicting him."

Crisp writes to Fanny in answer to her foregoing journal-letter: "How wonderfully well, in half a dozen masterly touches, has Johnson made a striking likeness of Garrick! It half reconciles me to his heavy Dictionary. I am now convinced (putting together your account of him and what I had heard before) that his real *forte* is *conversation*. His quickness, his originality, his oddities, his singularities (which so well become him and perhaps would nobody else) must make him a model of an entertaining companion."

It is remarkable that the recluse Crisp should thus distinguish the very talents by which this great man was to be known to posterity. Is it not by his conversation (recorded, happily,) rather than by any of his works that Dr. Johnson's personality has such a firm hold upon us in this twentieth century?

"Well, Fanny," continues Crisp, "since I can't come to London and personally partake of the turtle feast, you saved and collected me a

Lexiphanes in St. Martin's Street

part of it, so well selected, so well clos'd up, and packed with such care, that it has all the full relish, and the high flavour of the *Callipash* and *Callipee*. This being the case, d'ye think my modesty will restrain me from crying more, more?"



CHAPTER VIII

MATTERS PLAYFUL AND PERVERSE

CHARLOTTE ANN BURNEY, the youngest of Dr. Burney's four daughters by his first wife, wrote journals like her elder sisters, though in an original way of her own. She had a quick eye to observe traits of character and peculiarities in those about her, and a lively sense of humour. Her spirits, we are told, "might be checked, but could not be subdued," so the reader must pardon some audacious words which may startle him in the innocent fun of this girl of sixteen years.

In the following extract from a journal written in 1777, we meet with Garrick at the theatre, though no longer as an actor, but as a spectator, as he had recently retired from the stage.

Garrick, who was seated with his back to Charlotte and Susan, had not at first seen them ; but suddenly turning round, he exclaimed—

" ' Ha ! what is it you ! ' and so saying he shook hands with us. Lord, how consequential I felt just then !

Matters Playful and Perverse

“ ‘Well, but you an’t alone?’ ”

“ ‘Oh, no, Sir, we have a lady with us.’ How friendly, and fatherly, sweet soul!

“ ‘Well, but how have you done this long while? I’m so glad to see you.’ ”

“ ‘And we’re so proud to be acknowledged,’ answered Susey. She said right, for *splitt me* if I’d not a hundred times rather be spoken to by Garrick in public than by His Majesty, God bless him!

“ There was a *Lilliputian* dance by about a dozen children, none more than twelve, I’m sure, and he asked me very much to go and join them.

“ ‘Come, shall you and I make *one* among ’em? Come, if you will, I will; I only wait for you. We should look as handsome as any of them.’ ”

“ ‘I fancy,’ rejoined I, ‘we should look like Patagonians among them.’ ”

“ ‘Oh,’ says he, ‘I should be the *fattagonian*.’ ”

“ How amazingly ready he is! . . . He was saying that my father had promised to lend him some journals, and I said Charles was at home, and would be vastly happy to wait upon him with the journals.

“ ‘What, the Cherry Derry * of the age, is he in town? But I don’t know whether I can

* A nickname that Garrick had given him.

The House in St. Martin's Street

explain the matter more clearly if I come myself.'

"L—d, I thought I must have been *fain* to take one of Mr. Astley's flying leaps into the pit for joy! But I calm'd my transport a little . . . and could not refrain from asking sister Susey, in a whisper that he could not help hearing, this simple question—'whether Mr. Garrick had settled to come next morning?'

"Upon which he turned to me with one of the gruffest of his lion looks—

" 'I will.'

" 'To-morrow, sir?'

" 'I'll come to-morrow,' answered he, in the same tone of voice.

"The farce was 'Piety in Pattens,' most wretchedly written and acted, all that I saw of it, for Susey hadn't patience to stay, though she might have paid herself by half an hour longer of [Garrick's] company! He laughed as much as he could have done at the most excellent piece in the world. Indeed, to borrow one of Fanny's expressions, 'it was *bad* enough to be *good*.'

"Mr. George Garrick was there, and Garrick introduced us to him with 'Here's two of my children, two of the Burneys.' How kind he is to us all! He was very intent either upon this *petit pièce* or his own cogitations, so we were

Matters Playful and Perverse

obliged to *sail* off without saying anything, to my no small *griggitation*.

“Next morning, while I was making my father’s tea, I heard three knocks at the door (which were the sweetest music I had had my ears tickled with for many a {bad
good day}), upon which, after knocking down the tea cannister, dropping the teapot lid into the water, and scalding my fingers, I tumbled upstairs and met him.

“‘Well, why, what did you steal away for? I intended to have seen you safe, but what did you mean by it?’

“Before I could have given an answer of any sort, Betty, who stood by with the broom in her hand, and whose *cockles* were tickled by his droll attitudes and way of expressing himself, burst out laughing; upon which he fairly caned her up a whole flight of stairs, desiring at the same time to know what she laughed for. As soon as he was safely *moored* in the *chaos*,* he attacked me again.

“‘Well, but, Piety in pattens, how came you to run away, hay? I remember the time when she was not quite so cruel, when I used to tuck her under my arm and run away with her, but now she runs from *me*! But *Piety in pattens* blush’d at shaking hands with me in public!—didn’t you,

* A name signifying Dr. Burney’s study.

The House in St. Martin's Street

didn't you? Then the folks all stared, and we (I admire his saying *we*) looked so handsome! . . .'

"He took off Dr. Johnson most admirably. Indeed, I enjoy'd it doubly from having been in his company: his *see-saw*, his *pawing*, his very *look*, and his voice! . . . He took him off in a speech (that has *stuck in his gizzard* ever since some friendly person was so obliging as to repeat it to him). . . . 'Yes, yes; Davy has some convivial pleasantries in him; but 'tis a futile fellow.'

"He ask'd my father how he stood his ground at Straythem.*

"'Oh,' says my father, 'vastly well, and I can assure you Johnson fights your battles for you.' Upon which Garrick insisted upon knowing *who with?* But my father *declared off for that*.

"'Well, but, Burney, I'll never forgive you if you won't tell me.' . . . And so he went on all the way downstairs. . . . And when he got out of the door—'Well, Burney, here ends our friendship!'

"Becket the bookseller came with him, and he walk'd on a little before Garrick, and he was impudent enough to take him off, to his *face*, I was going to say, but to do him justice he did it like a *gentleman*, behind his back. . . .

"Thus ended his visit, sweet soul! He had

* This is one of Charlotte's puns.

Matters Playful and Perverse

on his favourite *scratch* wig, his *mob wig*, as Mr. Twining calls it;—but in spite of it he looked as *abominably* handsome as I think I ever saw him.”

In another journal, of which only fragments remain, Charlotte describes a rather comical *meeting* of wits in St. Martin’s Street, of which we find further details in Fanny’s “Memoir” of her father.

The occasion of this party was a strong desire, expressed by Mr. Greville (Dr. Burney’s former patron), Mrs. Greville, and their daughter, Mrs. Crewe, to meet Dr. Johnson and Mrs. Thrale.

Dr. Burney hoping to take off “what might be stiff or formidable in an encounter between these celebrated persons, who were absolute strangers to one another . . . determined to vary the energy of intellectual debate by . . . the sweetness of instrumental harmony.” For this purpose he had invited the Italian singer, Signor Piozzi, as well as the Charles Rousseau Burneys, to join the gathering; and as soon as the company were assembled, he called upon Piozzi for a cantata. “But this move of the Doctor’s proved to be the herald to general discomforture . . . for neither the Grevilles nor the Thrales heeded music beyond what belonged to it as fashion; the expectations of the Grevilles were all occupied by Dr. Johnson; and those of

The House in St. Martin's Street

the Thrales by Mrs. Greville, the authoress of the Ode to Indifference."

Dr. Johnson, in the mean time, had come to the party with every intention to pass two or three hours very agreeably. He had even dressed with unusual care. "Dr. Johnson," writes Charlotte, "was immensely *smart*, for *him*,—for he had not only a very decent tidy suit of cloathes on, but his hands, face, and linnen were clean, and he treated us with his *worsted wig* which Mr. Thrale made him a present of, because it scarce ever gets out of curl, and he generally diverts himself with laying down just after he has got a fresh wig on." But Dr. Johnson, it seems, was "the most silent creature, when not particularly drawn out," and Mr. Greville, in spite of his pride of rank, hesitating to enter into the lists of argument with this "leviathan of literature," the company awaited in vain for their discourse.

"Mrs. Thrale of the whole coterie," Fanny tells us, "was alone at her ease. She feared not Dr. Johnson, for fear made no part of her composition," and provoked by the general dulness of the company, she determined to effect some kind of diversion. "She suddenly but softly arose, and, stealing on tip-toe behind Signor Piozzi, who was accompanying himself on the pianoforte in an animated *arria parlante*, with his back to the company, she began imitating

Matters Playful and Perverse

him by squaring her elbows, elevating them with ecstatic shrugs of the shoulders, and casting up her eyes, while languishingly reclining her head, as if she were not less enthusiastically struck with the transports of harmony than himself."

This pantomime "was not perceived by Dr. Johnson, who faced the fire with his back to the performer." But the general amusement was of short duration, for "Dr. Burney, shocked lest the poor Signor should observe and be hurt by this mimicry, glided gently round to Mrs. Thrale, and with something between pleasantry and severity whispered to her, 'Because, madam, you have no ear yourself for music, will you destroy the attention of all who, in that one point, are otherwise gifted?'

"... [Mrs. Thrale] took this rebuke with a candour and a sense of justice the most amiable; she nodded her approbation of the admonition, and, returning to her chair, quietly sat down, as she afterwards said, like a pretty little miss, for the remainder of one of the most humdrum evenings she had ever passed." *

Yet another reproof was to be administered before this "party of pleasure" broke up.

Mr. Greville, finding that Dr. Johnson continued to remain in a silent reverie, chose to keep

* This strange incident marked Mrs. Thrale's first introduction to the man who was hereafter to be her second husband.

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aloof from the company, "and assuming his most supercilious air of distant superiority, planted himself, immovable as a noble statue, upon the hearth, as if a stranger to the whole set."

There is a character in Fanny Burney's novel of "Cecilia"—the elder Delville—a lofty, pompous individual, eaten up with family pride, whose character, it is supposed, was suggested by that of Mr. Greville.

"Mr. Greville and the other gentlemen were so kind and considerate," remarks Charlotte, "as to divert themselves by making a fire-skreen to the whole room. Dr. Johnson made them make off, for when nobody would have imagined that he had [even] known the gentlemen were in the room, he said that 'if he was not *ashamed*, he would keep the fire from the ladies too.' This reproof (for a reproof it certainly was, altho' given in a very comical dry way) was productive of a scene as *good as a comedy*; for Mr. Suard* tumbled on to the sopha directly, Mr. Thrale on to a chair, Mr. Davenant sneaked off the premises, seemingly in as great a fright and as much confounded as if he had done any bad action, and Mr. Gruel,† being left solus, was obliged to stalk off . . . and it was pretty evidently against the grain."

* Seward.

† Charlotte's nickname for Mr. Greville.

CHAPTER IX

ACTING AT BARBORNE LODGE

IN the spring of 1777, Fanny, who was paying a happy visit at Chesington, was hurried home by the intelligence that her uncle, Richard Burney, had arrived in town for the express purpose of carrying her back with him to Worcester.

This uncle, who was an elder brother of Dr. Burney, lived, together with his large family of sons and daughters, at Barborne Lodge, a handsome red-brick house, standing in its own grounds, about a mile from the city of Worcester. The town has now crept out in that direction, but a hundred years ago Barborne Lodge stood in the country.

Fanny was rather in awe of her "lordly uncle," as Crisp dubbed him, but when her shyness had worn off, she found he had more of kindness towards her than she had at all suspected.

On her arrival at his house, Fanny found herself one of a merry party in all the excitement

The House in St. Martin's Street

of preparation for private theatricals. Two plays had been chosen—"The Way to Keep Him," by Murphy, and "Tom Thumb," a burlesque by Fielding. In both dramas Fanny was assigned important parts, a formidable undertaking to her,



BARBORNE LODGE.

but she almost forgot her "inward terror," in interest over the part of Tom Thumb, which was to be enacted by her little niece Nancy, the eldest child of Charles Rousseau and Hetty Burney, aged six years, now paying a visit to her grandfather and aunts.

The great day of the performance must have

Acting at Barborne Lodge

been April 6th, for Fanny, writing to Susan on the 7th, gives a full account of the whole affair as having taken place on the preceding day. "The morning was ushered in," she writes, "by a general disturbance. We were all inconceivably busy ; we contrived, however, for little Nancy's sake, to rehearse Tom Thumb, and then we bribed her to lie down, and most fortunately she slept for more than three hours, which made her very wakeful all the rest of the day and night.

"At dinner we did not sit down above three at a time ; one was with the hairdresser, another finishing some dress, another, some scenery ; and so on. I was quite amazed to see how my uncle submitted to all this confusion ; but he was the first to promote our following our own affairs."

Before five o'clock company began to arrive.

"You can have no idea," continues Fanny, "what a shatter every new-comer gave me. I could hardly dress myself,—hardly knew where I was,—hardly could stand. Betsy, too, was very much flurried. . . . Richard and James gave all their thoughts to their own adornment ; Tom capered about the house in great joy ; little Nancy jumped and laughed ; Edward was tolerably composed ; but Becky was in an ecstasy of pleasure, she felt no fright or palpitation. . . .

"We were now quite ready . . . the Band was got into order for the Overture, and the

The House in St. Martin's Street

company going to be summoned upstairs, when another chaise arrived, and it proved from Gloucester, with the Doctor [Wall] and the Captain [Coussmaker]. I assure you this frightened me so much, that I most heartily



HALL IN BARBORNE LODGE.

wished myself twenty miles off. I was quite sick, and, if I had dared, should have given up the part.

“ . . . At length they all came upstairs : a green curtain was drawn before them, and the

Acting at Barborne Lodge

Overture was played. Miss Humphries * did all the honours ; for Nancy [senior] was engaged as prompter, and my uncle, one of the band. . . . The Overture, you must know, was performed in the *passage* ; for we had no room for an orchestra in the theatre. . . . The theatre looked extremely well, and was fitted up in a very dramatic manner, with side scenes, and two figures of Tragedy and Comedy at each hand, and a head of Shakespear in the middle. We had four changes of scenes."

The chief characters in "The Way to Keep Him" were cast as follows :—

Lovemore	Richard Burney, junr.
Sir Brilliant Fashion	...	James	„
Mrs. Lovemore	...	Fanny	„
The Widow Bellmour	...	Rebecca	„
Muslin (servant to Mrs. Lovemore)	...	Betsy	„
Sideboard (a servant)	...	Edward	„
Pompey (a black servant)	...	Tom	„

After describing the various costumes, Fanny mentions her own dress as being of green and grey trimmed with white ribbon. She wore also a gauze apron. When the curtain rose the two servants were seen seated at a table playing at

* A sister-in-law of Mr. Richard Burney.

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cards ; they were joined by Muslin, whose part was acted with much spirit.

“ . . . Next came my scene,” writes Fanny. “ I was discovered drinking tea. To tell you how *infinitely*, how beyond measure I was terrified at my situation, I really cannot . . . the few words I had to speak, before Muslin came to me, I know not whether I spoke or not, neither does anybody else. . . . I am sure, *without flattery*, I looked like a most egregious fool ; for I made no use of the tea-things, I never tasted a drop ; once, indeed, I made an attempt, but my hand shook so violently, I was fain to put down the cup instantly in order to save my gown.

“ . . . Take notice that, from the beginning to the end, no *applause* was given to the play. The company judged that it would be inelegant, and therefore, as they all said, *forebore* ; but, indeed, a little clapping would have been very encouraging, and I heartily wish they had not practised such *self-denial*.

“ James, as Sir Brilliant Fashion (who was most superbly dressed), entered with an air so immensely conceited and affected, and at the same time so uncommonly bold, that I could scarce stand his *abord* . . . [but] notwithstanding my embarrassment, I found he did the part *admirably*. . . . He looked very fashionable, very assured, very affected, very *every way the thing*

Acting at Barborne Lodge

Not one part in the piece was better or more properly done ; nor did any give more entertainment.

“ . . . We were next joined by Richard, whose *non-chalance*, half vacancy, and half absence excellently marked the careless, unfeeling husband which he represented. Between his extreme unconcern and Sir Brilliant's extreme assurance I had not much trouble in appearing the only languid and discontented person in company.

“ The act finished by a *solo* of Betsy, which I did not hear ; for I ran into a corner to recover breath against the next act. My uncle was very good-natured and spoke many comfortable things to me. . . . He said I wanted *nothing but exertion*, and charged me to speak louder and take courage.”

Describing the 2nd act, Fanny remarks :
“ Fortunately for me, my part and my spirits, in this act, had great sympathy ; for Mrs. Lovemore is almost unhappy enough for a tragedy heroine ; and I assure you, she lost none of her pathos by any giddiness of mine ! I gave her melancholy feelings very fair play, and *looked* her misfortunes with [so] much sadness . . . that I believe some of my auditors thought me a much better and more *artificial* actress than I dreamt of being myself ; and I had the satisfaction to hear some few *buzzes* of approbation, which did me no harm.”

The House in St. Martin's Street

The act over. "Again my uncle spoke the most flattering things to encourage me. . . . 'It is impossible,' he said, 'to do the part with greater propriety, or to speak with greater feeling, or more sensibility; every, the most insignificant, thing you say, *comes home* to me.' You can't imagine how much this kindness from him cheered me."

Fanny now took courage and was enabled to perform the third and final act, when Mrs. Lovemore suddenly assumes a new character, and is alert, sportive, and triumphant, with proper spirit. "Richard," she says, "was really charming in this scene; so thoroughly negligent, inattentive, and sleepy, that he kept a continual *titter* among the young ladies. But when he was roused from his indifference by Mrs. Lovemore's pretended alteration of temper and conduct,—he *sung small* indeed! . . . You can hardly suppose how *little* he looked! how mortified! astonished! and simple! It was admirably in character.

"Richard . . . was very delicate and very comfortable to me in our reconciliation, when Mrs. Bellmour says, 'Come, kiss and be friends' . . . for he excused all the embracing part, and, without making any fuss, took my hand, which, bowing over (like Sir Charles Grandison), he most respectfully pressed to his lips.

"We now all hastened," continues Fanny,

Acting at Barborne Lodge

"to dress for 'Tom Thumb,' and the company went into the dining-room for some refreshments. Little Nancy was led away by Miss Humphries, who made her take a formal leave of the company, as if going to bed, that they might not expect what followed. . . . She flew up to me, 'Ay, Cousin Fanny, I saw you drinking your tea by yourself, before all the company! Did you think they would not see you?'

"You must know she always calls me *Cousin Fanny*, because she says everybody else does; so she's sure I can't really be an *aunt*.

"During the whole performance she had not the least idea what we all meant, and wanted several times to join us; especially while I was weeping. 'Pray, what does Cousin Fanny cry for, Aunt Hannah; does she cry really, *I say?*'"

In the burlesque of "Tom Thumb," Fanny took the part of Huncamunca—a part which she evidently played with great spirit, since the fun and nonsense of the whole drama made her quite forget her fears of the audience.

The farce opens with a ludicrous scene between Noodle and Doodle. "Then enters the King," writes Fanny, "which was performed by Richard most admirably, and with a *dignified drollery* that was highly diverting and exceeding clever. Betsy accompanied him. She was extremely *well* in the Queen, both in strutting and

The House in St. Martin's Street

pomposity. Their dresses, though made of mere tinsel and all sort of gaudiness, had a charming and most theatrical effect. Their crowns, jewels, trains, etc., were superb.

“Next entered—Tom Thumb!

“When the King says, ‘But see! our warrior comes! The great Tom Thumb! the little hero, giant-killing boy!’

“Then there was an immense *hub-a-dub*, with drums and trumpets, and a clarionet, to proclaim his approach.

“The sweet little girl looked as beautiful as an angel! She had an exceeding pretty and most becoming dress, made of pink persian, trimmed with silver and spangles; . . . her mantle was white; she had a small truncheon in her hand, and a *Vandyke* hat; her own sweet hair was left to itself.

“. . . The company, none of them expecting her, were delighted and amazed beyond measure. A general laugh and exclamations of surprise went round. Her first speech—

“‘When I’m not thank’d at all, I’m thanked enough;
I’ve done my duty, and I’ve done no more’—

she spoke so loud, and so articulately, and with such courage, that people could scarce credit their senses when they looked at her baby face. I declare, I could hardly help crying; I was so

Acting at Barborne Lodge

charmed, and at the same time frightened for her. Oh, how we all wished for Hetty! It was with



THE MUSICIANS.

difficulty I restrained myself from running on with her; and my uncle was so agitated, that he began, involuntarily, a most vehement clapping; a sound to which we had hitherto been strangers;

The House in St. Martin's Street

but this hint was instantly taken, and it was echoed and re-echoed by the audience."

* * * * *

We have visited Barborne Lodge and have peeped into the very rooms where this gay company assembled on that spring evening a hundred and thirty years ago. The house is now forlorn and deserted, but there are traces left of its former dignity. The staircase, which leads up to the landing or "passage" where the band was placed, is adorned with elegant balustrades. There are four rooms of good size opening on to this landing, two of which probably communicated with each other in former days, as they are divided only by a canvas partition wall. Between them we fancy the "green curtain" to have hung.

As we stood in these, now silent, chambers, we seemed to hear the hum of merry voices, and the whole scene of the acting rose before our eyes! There was the timid Fanny, in her grey and green attire, as Mrs. Lovemore; there was the bold Sir Brilliant Fashion, in all his finery; and then again, there was little Nancy, in her spangled doublet, stepping on to the stage to the sound of trumpets and drums, and bringing down the house with applause!

CHAPTER X

GLOUCESTER GAIETIES

FURTHER gaieties awaited the actors of Barborne Lodge. One of their audience—the eccentric Dr. Wall—invited the whole company to visit him and his wife at their house in Gloucester, to witness a military review and to dance at a military ball.

This gentleman was a son of the Dr. Wall, who founded the celebrated china manufactory of Worcester;—the W.W. seen on early pieces of that pottery, signifying “Wall of Worcester.” The Walls’ house is still to be seen standing in the Cathedral close at the south-west corner of the College Green.

We can imagine the arrival of the Worcester party, and fancy we see the great “coach and four,” in which we are told the cousins travelled, passing beneath the tall limes that border the “Green,” and drawing up before the pillared portico of Dr. Wall’s house.

“We arrived at Gloucester about 5 o’clock,”

The House in St. Martin's Street

writes Fanny. "Dr. Wall handed us out of the coach with one shoe all over mud and the other clean, but without any buckle. He welcomed us very cordially; 'but how happened it,' cried he, 'that you did not come by water? I have been almost to Tewkesbury to meet you, and walked



KING JOHN'S BRIDGE, TEWKESBURY.

along the shore till I was covered with mud; there are two or three barges gone up the river to meet you. . . .'

"He then went up to his wife and returned with her compliments, and that she was extremely unhappy she could not wait upon us, but had all her hair combed out, and was waiting for the man to come and dress it, who had disappointed her ever since two o'clock.

"Dr. Wall began immediately to talk *of the*

Gloucester Gaieties

play, and said he could think of nothing else. 'I hope, Miss Fanny,' said he, 'you are now quite recovered from the fright of your first appearance in public; though, upon my word, I should never have found it out if they had not told me of it; it appeared so well in character, that I took it for granted that it belonged to the part.'

"'It was very fortunate for me,' said I, 'that I had so serious and melancholy a part; for I should totally have ruined any other.'

"'The character, ma'am,' returned he, 'seemed wrote on purpose for you! Captain Coussmaker says he went to see "The Way to Keep Him" at Bath, but it was so ill done, that, after all of you, he could not sit it, so he came out before it was half over.'"

It is evident from the effect produced on the audience that Fanny had performed her part with far more dramatic power than she had any idea of. Mrs. Lovemore's was a rôle, it seems, calculated to bring out first-rate powers, for it had been performed by Mrs. Siddons herself.

Fanny continues, "James, in a whisper, asked me where I thought Richard was. I could not possibly guess. 'Why,' said he, 'he is in the back lane leading to the house, standing in the rain without his great-coat, and talking to Mrs. Wall, who is leaning out of the window to answer him, with all her hair about her ears!' Thus,

The House in St. Martin's Street

you see, there was no exaggeration—*ver prett, n'est-ce pas ?* *—of Richard's favour with this fair lady.

“. . . Mrs. Wall did not make her appearance till tea was half over. The Doctor [had] insisted that Nancy should make tea, and not wait for *Mrs. Brilly*, which, or *my Ladyship*, he always calls her. 'I think you know Mrs. Wall's name is Brilliana.'

“Dr. Wall, though a very indifferent performer, is really very fond of music, and he has as strange and mixed a collection of musical instruments as I never before saw. He brought them all out of a closet in the parlour . . . one by one; and he drew out some tone—such as it was!—from each before he changed. First came a French horn,—then a trumpet,—then a violin,—a bass,—a bassoon,—a Macaroni fiddle,—and, in short, I believe he produced twenty of different kinds. An overture was then attempted,—everybody that possibly could bore a part,—and I really would not wish to hear a much worse performance: and yet this music lasted to supper!”

This discordant concert must have taken place in the long drawing-room, on the first floor, whose three recessed windows overlook the College Green. When supper was announced,

* An exclamation of Omai's.

Gloucester Gaieties

we can fancy we see the whole party descending by a grand old oaken staircase into the great square hall, out of which the dining- or supper-room opens.

“I think I never saw a more queerly droll



HALL IN DR. WALL'S HOUSE.

character,” says Fanny, “than Dr. Wall’s. He lives just according to the whim of the moment ; . . . he says everything that occurs to him, whether of praise or censure, compliment or ridicule ; [but] he means to offend nobody, and never dreams of taking offence himself. . . . For example, looking hard at Betsy, ‘Pray,’ said he,

The House in St. Martin's Street

‘did ever anybody take notice of your eyes?’—
‘My eyes, Sir?—Why?’—‘Because they a’n’t fellows,—one is brown and one grey.’”

[Finding the Doctor one morning engaged with his musical instruments.] “He presently flung them all away—and what do you think for?—why, to run after *me*, making me run, whether I would or not . . . but the less he found me inclined for this sport, the more determined he seemed to pursue it, and we danced round the room, Hayed* in and out of the chairs and *all that* till it grew so late that he ordered dinner, saying, ‘Come, good folks, let’s take care of ourselves. Mrs. Brilly has certainly run away,—we will have our dinner without further ceremony.’

“The next morning we had but just done [breakfast] when the Militia began to be drawn forth upon the College Green, . . . and Lord Berkeley [their Colonel], who resides next door but one to the Doctor, appeared before the window. We all flew to put on our hats, and then went in a body to the door, to see the ceremony of preparing the men for marching to the field. Here we were joined by Captain Coussmaker, Captain Snell, Captain Miers, and heaven knows who—for Dr. Wall is acquainted with all the corps,—who are all men of fortune and family. We were also joined by a Mr. Davis, a young

* The Hay was an old pastoral dance.

Gloucester Gaieties

man a neighbour of the Doctor. . . . He is handsome and agreeable, though I should like him much better were he less forward. . . .

"We went to the review in two coaches . . . but Mrs. Wall stayed at home, lest she should miss a hairdresser she wanted to *have to herself* against the Ball!"

The review took place, it seems, upon a waste piece of ground that lies beyond the West Gate of Gloucester, called the Town Ham.

Arrived there, most of the occupants of the coaches descended, "[but] as I was by no means well," continues Fanny, "[and] had silk shoes, I determined to content myself with what I could see from the coach: and away went all the rest except Edward. Harry Davis also insisted on keeping me company; and he entertained me with an account of the state of affairs in Gloucester; and told me 'that though he loved dancing better than anything under heaven, and would give the world to be of our set, yet he would not go to the Ball to-night for fifty guineas, because it was a *Berkeley* Ball,—and he and his family were *Chesters*!'"

Party feeling was running very high in Gloucester just then. A certain Mr. William Chester had been recently returned as member for the county, but the Honble. George Berkeley had accused the High Sheriff of partiality

The House in St. Martin's Street

towards Mr. Chester, and had headed a petition to the House of Commons praying that the election should be invalidated. Chesters and Berkeleys were therefore at daggers drawn.

"Dr. Wall," continues Fanny, "advised me, or rather rioted me, to get out [of the coach] and go and see the Salute; and so . . . rather than appear finical and fine-ladyish, I got out, and was escorted across the field to the rest of the party, who stood very near Lord Berkeley, the better to see the ceremony.

"Harry Davis, looking at my shoes, said I should certainly catch my death if I did not take care (for it had rained all the morning), and then put his handkerchief for me to stand upon. I was quite ashamed of being made such a fuss with, but he *compelled* me to comply.

". . . When we returned home we found that Mrs. Wall was still at her toilette! . . . and when at last she appeared, she had only her hair dressed, and very extravagantly, nay, preposterously, and no cap on, or any other appearance of readiness. . . . The hairdresser was appointed to be with her again by four o'clock. . . .

"When the man came he was seized by so many, one after another, that we almost feared we should have been obliged to give up the ball, it was so very late ere he came near us. The affair became so serious . . . lest the minuets

Gloucester Gaieties

should be over, that the party was fain to separate and go off in chairs as soon as they were ready."

The ball probably took place in the Booth Hall, since disappeared, which is described as "a very lofty lath-and-plaster building, full of windows."

"On arriving at the ball-room," continues Fanny, "James immediately engaged me for country dances. Dr. Wall was so differently *wigged* that I really did not know him, and when he came and said to me, 'So, Ma'am, I'm glad to see you here,—why, you like coming late to these places?' I at first took him for a stranger; and he plagued me about it all the rest of the time I remained at Gloucester . . . 'so you didn't know me?'—made every third sentence. . . .

"It was two o'clock in the morning ere we sat down to supper [in Dr. Wall's house]. Mr. Berkeley and Captain Coussmaker were of our party. We were all in prodigious spirits, and *kept it up* till near 5 in the morning.

". . . Dr. Wall, who sat next me, was mighty facetious . . . indeed he scarce ever spoke to me but with a quotation from 'Tom Thumb' or an allusion to Huncamunca.

"After supper, Richard, James, Betsy, and Mrs. Wall sang some catches. . . . Mr. Berkeley sometimes joined the treble part, and Dr. Wall

The House in St. Martin's Street

the bass, but so ludicrously as to make me laugh immoderately. Richard gave himself a thousand droll airs, in the *Italian way*, squaring his elbows, making faces, heightening his eyebrows, and acting profusely.

“When at length we thought it time to retire, Mrs. Wall rang for candles—but upon opening the parlour door . . . we all burst into a general laughter at the call for candles, for we found ourselves in *broad day-light*! We therefore wished all the gentlemen *good morning* and left them to their wine.”



CHAPTER XI

EVELINA

FANNY BURNEY'S chief delight from childhood had been the scribbling in secret of stories, poems, and even of tragedies. Reserved and shy by nature, it was easier to her to give vent to "her fancies and vagaries" on paper than to express them by word of mouth. When, however, she had reached the mature age of fifteen, she became convinced that it was a duty to combat her growing passion for writing, and, in a moment of self-denial, she "made over to a bonfire, in a paved play-court, her whole stock of prose goods and chattels."

Among the papers thus consumed was a story which Fanny had called "The History of Caroline Evelyn." The plot had taken special hold of her mind, and, ruminating on the subject some years later, she conceived the idea of writing a new story upon the adventures of Caroline's young daughter, Evelina.

How long Fanny was engaged upon this

The House in St. Martin's Street

work it is impossible to say. She wrote it in secret, partly in her own home and partly in her beloved "Liberty Hall," the home of her Daddy Crisp, at Chesington. In the garden of that old mansion there is a summer-house still standing where Fanny used to retire to scribble. "We pass our time here very serenely," she writes from Chesington to her sister Susan (her only confidant), "and distant as you may think us from the great world, I sometimes find myself in the midst of it, though nobody suspects the brilliancy of the company I occasionally keep."

The very manuscript of *Evelina** which we have looked through, bears evidence of the manner in which the work was composed. Innumerable pieces of paper, of all sizes and shapes, are written upon, sometimes in a leisurely style, and sometimes in all haste. In this manuscript the title is given as—

"EVELINE,
or Memoirs of a Young Lady
In a Series of Letters."

This title was afterwards changed, and *Eveline* became *Evelina*. We give a facsimile of Fanny's rough draft for the later title-page, the wording of which, however, was

* Now in the possession of Mr. F. Leverton Harris.

EVELINA

or

A

Young Lady's

ENTRANCE

into

LIFE

VOLUME I

FANNY BURNEY'S FIRST SKETCH FOR THE TITLE-PAGE OF "EVELINA"



Evelina

again slightly altered before the book appeared in public, "entrance into Life" becoming "entrance into the World."

"When the little narrative," writes Fanny in the "Memoirs" of her father, "began to assume a 'questionable shape,' a wish—as vague as it was fantastic—crossed the brain of the writer to see her work in print. She communicated, under promise of inviolable silence, this idea to her sisters, who entered into it with much more amusement than surprise, as they well knew her taste for quaint sports."

When the first part of the book was completed, "she wrote a letter, without any signature, to offer this unfinished work to a bookseller [Mr. Dodsley, of Pall Mall], with a promise to send the sequel in the following year."

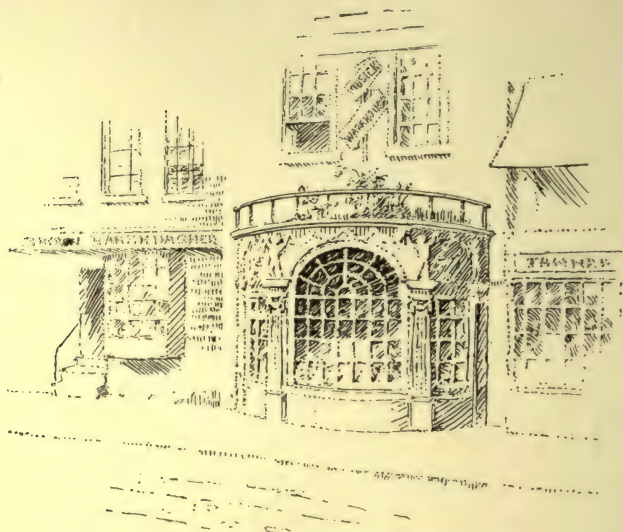
But before doing this she took elaborate precautions to keep the authorship of her story a profound secret. Having for long past been her father's amanuensis, she feared lest some compositor, then engaged in printing his "History of Music," should happen to see and recognize her handwriting. To protect herself against such an accident, she copied her whole manuscript in a feigned hand, and sent in this copy to the bookseller.

Fanny's letter to Mr. Dodsley was forwarded by the London post, with a desire that the

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answer might be addressed under cover to "Mr. King, at the Orange Coffee House, Haymarket."

Her brother Charles, "without reading a word of the work . . . joyously undertook to be her agent at the coffee-house with her letters,



SHOP-FRONTS IN THE OLD HAYMARKET.

and to the bookseller with the manuscript." But Mr. Dodsley's answer was not propitious. He declined looking at anything that was anonymous. The young people having "sat in full committee upon this lofty reply," finally fixed upon Mr. Lowndes, bookseller of Fleet Street, for their next venture.

Evelina

And now began Miss Burney's anonymous correspondence with that person, every letter being subscribed thus, —— ———.

The original letters are still preserved in the Burney family. Some are in the possession of Archdeacon Burney, others in that of the descendants of Fanny's sister Charlotte, whose daughter, Mrs. Barrett, edited the "Diary and Letters" in 1842-6. These last are now lying before us. They are stitched together, and are docketted by Fanny in later life as follows:—

"Some of the
Original Letters
of Mr. Lowndes
The Bookseller.

To the Anonymous Authour
of *Evelina*—
with 2 Letters of that Authour."

Those two letters of Fanny's are now printed for the first time, as are also the four letters of Lowndes that bear the dates respectively of Dec. 23rd and Dec. 29th, 1776, and also Jan. 17th and Nov. 11th, 1777. Fanny's first letter bears the inscription—

The House in St. Martin's Street

"To MR. LOWNDES,
" Bookseller, Fleet Street.

" Dec^r 1776.

" SIR,

" As an author has a kind of natural claim to a connection with a Bookseller, I hope that in the character of the former you will pardon me, although a stranger, for the liberty I take of requesting you to favour me with an answer to the following queries:—

" Whether you will take the trouble of candidly perusing a MS. novel sent to you without any public name or private recommendation ?

" Whether it is now too late in the year for printing the first volume of the above MS. this season ?

" And whether if, after reading, you should think it worth printing, you would buy the copy without ever seeing, or knowing, the Author ?

" The singularity of this address, you may easily imagine, results from a singularity of situation.

" I must beg you to direct your answer to Mr. King, To be left at the Orange Coffee House till called for.

" I am, Sir,

" Your very humble Serv^t

" ——— ———

" MR. LOWNDES."

* (Ms. S.) To Mr Lowndes
Bookseller, Fleet Street. Dec^r. 1776.

Sir, As an author has a kind of natural claim to a connexion with a Bookseller, I hope that, in character of the former, you will pardon me, although a stranger, for the liberty I take of requesting you to favour me with an answer to the following queries.

Whether you will take the trouble of candidly perusing a MS. Novel sent to you without any public name, ~~of~~ or private recommendation?

Whether it is now too late in the year for printing the first volume of the above MS. this season?

And whether if, after reading, you should think it worth printing, you would buy the copy without ever seeing, or knowing, the author?

The singularity of this address, you may easily imagine, results from a singularity of situation.

I must beg you to direct your answer to Mr. King, as he left at the Orange Coffee House till called for.

I am, Sir, your very humble Servant.

Mr. Lowndes.



Evelina

This letter, which evidently opens the correspondence, is not the same as the first letter to Lowndes in Archdeacon Burney's collection, which has recently appeared in print.* Those who are familiar with the appearance of that letter must have noticed (as Mr. Austin Dobson points out) that there are postmarks upon it which prove it to have been actually sent to Mr. Lowndes.

The letter, now given in facsimile, was probably a first draft for the other. It has evidently not been transmitted by post, but the handwriting would point to its having been written at the same period.

Upon Fanny Burney's letters to Lowndes in the Archdeacon's collection there are no dates. Those now given are dated respectively Dec. 1776 and Jan. 17th, 1777.

Mr. Lowndes' reply to the first letter is as follows :—

“SIR,

“I've not the least objection to what you propose, & if you favour me with sight of your MS. I'll lay aside other Business to read it & tell you my thoughts of it. With 2 Press's I can soon make it appear in print, for now is the time for a Novel.

“Y^r obed^t Servt^t

“FLEET STREET,

“Dec. 23, 1776.”

“THOS. LOWNDES.

* See *Cornhill Magazine* for April, 1905.

The House in St. Martin's Street

Great was the excitement amongst the young people in St. Martin's Street on the receipt of this letter ; and Charles, suitably disguised to impersonate " Mr. King," was sent with all haste to Mr. Lowndes, to convey to him the first volume of *Evelina*.

The period of suspense lasted only a few days, for on the 29th Dec. Mr. Lowndes writes—

" SIR,

" I've read and like the Manuscript,
& if you'll send the rest I'll soon run it over.

" Y^r obed^t

" T. LOWNDES."

This letter is addressed at the back as follows :—

" To Mr. King
at the

Orange Coffee
House.

" To be left
till called
for."

The second volume must have been despatched about a fortnight later, for Mr. Lowndes writes on the 17th Jan. (1777)—

Evelina

"SIR,

"I have read your Novel, & can't see any reason why you should not finish & publish it compleat. I'm sure it will be your interest as well as the Bookseller's. You may well add one volume to these, and I shall more eagerly print it. . . . I would rather print in July than now to publish an unfinished book. This I submit to your consideration & with wishes that you may come into my way of thinking. I'll restore the M^s to the gentleman that brought it.

"Y^r Ob^t Serv^t

"T. LOWNDES.

"FLEET-STREET,

"Jan^y 17th 1777."

Fanny consented to this plan with some reluctance, as she had hoped that Lowndes would agree to publish the volumes successively. We give a facsimile of her letter on the subject, as it is of special interest, being written in the "feigned handwriting," and docketted by Madame D'Arblay in later years: "N.B. This was the handwriting in which F.B. copied all *Evelina* to have her own unseen."

A period of nine months elapsed before the third and last volume of *Evelina* was in the hands of the publisher. In the mean time Fanny had made a partial confession to her father of her secret proceedings. In the "Prelude to the

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Worcester Journal," she writes, "Before I made this journey, while I was taking leave, I was so much penetrated by my father's kind parting embrace, that in the fullness of my heart I could not forbear telling him that I had sent a manuscript to Mr. Lowndes; earnestly beseeching him never to divulge it, nor to demand a sight of such trash as I could scribble; assuring him that Charles had managed to save me from being at all suspected. He could not help laughing; but I believe was much surprised at the communication. He desired me to acquaint him from time to time how *my work* went on, called himself the *Pere confident* (*sic*) and kindly promised to guard my secret as cautiously as I could wish."

The next letter in our series is from Mr. Lowndes. It is as follows:—

"SIR,

"I've read this 3^d Vol. & think it better than 1 & 2^d. If you please I'll give you Twenty Guineas for the Manuscript, and without loss of time put it to press.

"Y^r obedient Serv

"THOS. LOWNDES.

"FLEET-STREET,

"Nov^r 11, 1777."

This last letter is important, as it gives us the exact date upon which Mr. Lowndes made his

To Mr. Lowndes.

(N^o 5)

Jan^y 1777.

Sir

1

N.B. This was the
hand writing in which
F.B. copied the Evidence
to Anne her own words.

I am well contented with the openness of
your proceedings, & obliged to you for your advice.

My original plan was, to publish 2 volumes now,
& two more next year: I yield, however, to your experience
in these matters, & will defer the publication, till the
work is completely - though I should have been better
pleased to have felt the pulse of the public, before
I had proceeded.

I will write to you again, when I am ready for
the press. In the mean time, I must beg the favour
of a line, directed as before, to acquaint me how long
I may delay printing the Novel, without losing the proper
season for its appearance. I am, &c.
Y^r humble Serv^t. — —



Evelina

offer of twenty guineas for the complete work.

Some confusion has arisen as to this and other details, because when Fanny, fifty years later, introduced the "Story of the Publication of *Evelina*" into the "Memoirs" of her father, she made various small mistakes, caused probably by her trusting to her memory of the events, instead of referring to her own contemporary records.

Mr. Lowndes's terms were accepted, and early in the following year (1778) the first copy of the book was in print.

In the mean time Fanny had had to alter some of her arrangements. Her brother Charles was now at Cambridge, and she had asked her cousin Edward, who was residing with "the Aunts" in London, to act as her go-between with her publisher. In consequence of this she had changed the imaginary name of her agent from King to Grafton. She had also judged it wise to divulge her secret to her Aunts "under a vow of strict secrecy."

"About the middle of January," she writes, "my cousin Edward brought me a private message from my Aunts that a parcel was come for me under the name of Grafton. . . . I immediately conjectured what the parcel was, and found [enclosed] the following letter :—

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“ ‘ Mr. Grafton,*

“ ‘ SIR,

“ ‘ I take the Liberty to send you a Novel w^{ch} a Gent your acquaintance said you w^d hand to him. I beg with expedition as 'tis time it should be published, & 'tis requested he should first revise it, or the Reviewers may find a flaw.

“ ‘ I am

“ ‘ Y^r obed^t Serv^t

“ ‘ THO^s LOWNDES.

“ ‘ FLEET-STREET,

“ ‘ Jan^y 7, 1778.’ ”

One morning, towards the end of this same month of January, when the ladies of the family in St. Martin's Street were gathered round their breakfast-table, Mrs. Burney, who was glancing through a newspaper, suddenly read aloud the following announcement :—

“ This day was published

EVELINA,

or a Young Lady's Entrance into the World.

Printed for T. Lowndes, Fleet-street.”

“ Mrs. Burney,” writes Fanny, in the “ Memoirs ” of her father, “ who read this unsuspectingly, went

* This letter is given in the “ Early Diaries,” edited by Mrs. Raine Ellis.

Evelina

on immediately to other articles; but had she lifted her eyes from the paper, something more than suspicion must have met them, from the conscious colouring of the scribbler, and the irresistible smiles of the two sisters, Susanna and Charlotte, who were present." This was the first intimation that reached Fanny of her book being launched into the world.

A few weeks later she writes: "My little book, I am told, is now in all the Circulating Libraries. I have an exceeding odd sensation when I consider that it is now in the power of any and every body to read what I so carefully hoarded, even from my fast friends, till this last month or two,—and that a work which was so lately lodged, in all privacy in my bureau, may now be seen by every Butcher and Baker, Cobbler and Tinker throughout the three kingdoms for the small tribute of 3 pence." *

* The fee of the circulating library.

CHAPTER XII

EVELINA'S ENTRANCE INTO THE WORLD

FANNY soon began to hear praises of *Evelina* from her cousins and acquaintances who had chanced to see and read the book, but who had no suspicion whatever of her being its author.

Her chief dread in the affair was lest she should provoke the censure of those whom she most valued and loved. It was for this reason that she had not, as yet, summoned courage to divulge the matter to her father, when, in the month of May, she left home to pay a visit at Chesington in order to regain strength after a sharp attack of illness.

Susan writes to her on June 4th: "My father has at length got *Evelina*. I have been monstrously vexed that I was not at home when he first got it. I am sure I should have cried had I been present upon his opening the *Ode*—for the idea of it never occurs to me without bringing tears into my eyes."

In this *Ode* "To ——" Fanny had inscribed

Evelina's Entrance into the World

her book (though in veiled terms) to her father—that beloved father of whom it has been truly said, he was her pattern of all that was good and attractive in human nature.

One of the verses runs as follows :—

“ If in my heart the love of virtue glows,
’Twas planted there by an unerring rule ;
From thy example the pure flame arose,
Thy life, my precept,—thy good words my school.”

“Yesterday morning,” continues Susan, “when I was alone with (my father) a few minutes while he dressed—

“ ‘Why, Susan,’ said he to me, ‘I have got Fan’s book.’

“ ‘Sir, have you?’

“ ‘Yes ; but I suppose you must not tell her. Poor Fan’s such a prude. . . . I shall keep it locked up in my Sanctum Sanctorum’—pointing to his bureau. ‘I would not betray the poor girl for the world ; but upon my soul, I like it vastly. Do you know, I began to read it with Lady Hales and Miss Coussmaker yesterday?’

“ ‘Lord!’ cried I, a little alarmed, ‘you did not tell them——’

“ ‘Tell them? No, certainly. I said ’twas a book had been recommended to me—they’ll never know, and they like it *vastly* ; but upon my word, there’s something in the preface and dedication *vastly strong and well written*—better than

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I could have expected—and yet I did not think 'twould be *trash* when I began it.' ”

Soon afterwards, when he had finished reading the book, he remarked to Susan, “ *Upon my soul, I think it the best novel I know, excepting Fielding's*—and in some respects better than his. . . . Mr. Villars' character is admirably supported—and rises upon one in every letter; the language throughout his letters is *as good as anybody need write*. (N.B.—Spoken with *emphasis* and spirit.) . . . Lord Orville's character is just what it ought to be—perfectly benevolent and upright.”

“And without being *fade*, I think.”

“Oh, certainly; there's a *boldness* in it that struck me mightily . . . ‘*Evelina*’ is in a new style, too—so perfectly natural and innocent—and the scene between her and her father, Sir John Belmont,—I protest I think 'tis a scene for a Tragedy—*I blubber'd*. . . . For a young woman's work I look upon it to be really WONDERFUL!”

(“His own words,” exclaims Susan, “as I hope to live!”)

There is in existence a pretty water-colour drawing of this same scene by Edward Burney, which we shall have occasion to speak of again. In the illustrated edition of *Evelina* that appeared in 1779, the designs were by John Hamilton Mortimer, A.R.A., engraved by Bartolozzi, but

Evelina's Entrance into the World

to our thinking this drawing of Edward's has in it more real sentiment than any of the illustrations by Mortimer.

During the month of June Dr. Burney joined his daughter at Chesington for a flying visit. In a portion of her Diary (hitherto unpublished) Fanny describes their meeting—

“Chesington,

“June 23rd.

“I have had a visit from my beloved, my kindest Father, and he came determined to complete my recovery by his goodness. I was *almost* afraid, and *quite* ashamed to be alone with him; but he soon sent for me to his little Gallery Cabinet, and then with a significant smile that told me what was coming, and made me glow to my very forehead with anxious expectation, he said, ‘I have read your Book, Fanny, but you need not blush at it; it is full of merit—it is really extraordinary.’ I fell upon his neck with heart-beating emotion, and he folded me in his arms so tenderly that I sobbed upon his shoulder, so delighted was I with his precious approbation. But I soon recovered to a gayer pleasure.”

Soon after Dr. Burney's return home Mrs. Burney procured a copy of *Evelina*, as being a book much talked of; but she was still wholly

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unsuspicious of the author's having any connection with her own family. Probably Dr. Burney had not divulged Fanny's secret, desiring to see the effect the work would produce on his wife's mind whilst she was in ignorance of its authorship.

"This morning, between seven and eight," writes Susan on July 5th, "I was woke by a noise in the next room. Upon listening a minute or two I found it was my father and mother laughing in a most extraordinary manner. Presently I heard by the voice of the former that he was reading. . . . I had a little suspicion of what it might be, and started up and went to the door to satisfy myself. I presently not only discovered the book he was reading, but even the page . . . they were in the midst of the Ridotto scene—p. 64—and the eclats of laughter that accompanied it did my heart good.

"Every speech of Sir Clement's in this scene diverted my father no less than me, and at the question, 'My dear creature—why, *where could you be educated?*' he laid the book down to laugh till he cried; and when it was done said it was an admirable conversation, the poor girl's mistakes extremely natural, and the man of fashion's character *touch'd with delicacy* and written with great humour and spirit.

"In the next letter * Charlotte joined me, and

* *Evelina* is written in the form of Letters.

Evelina's Entrance into the World

we stood till we were cramp'd to death, not daring to move, and almost stifled ourselves with laughing. The next scene was productive of no less mirth than the Ridotto . . . the . . . letter from Mr. Villars he read with a tenderness which drew tears from me. Not a period of it did he pass over unnoticed. . . . I wished with all my heart you had been with Charlotte and me—for 'tis impossible by letter to convey an idea to you of how thoroughly he enjoyed every line of it. This was the last letter he read; but I believe 'twas near twelve before we breakfasted!"

We can imagine Fanny's delight in reading this account, and she now begged her father to communicate her secret, without further delay, to Mrs. Burney.

In the mean time *Evelina* had not remained unnoticed by the press. There had appeared a few lines of warm commendation of the book in the *London Review* as early as February, and in April there followed an excellent notice in the *Monthly Review*, in which the writer remarks: "This novel has given us so much pleasure in the perusal, that we do not hesitate to pronounce it one of the most sprightly, entertaining, and agreeable productions of this kind which has of late fallen under our notice. A great variety of natural incidents render the narrative extremely interesting."

The House in St. Martin's Street

The next account sent by Susan to her sister is of the effect being produced in the great world by *Evelina* and is in connection with a visit paid by Dr. Burney to Streatham.

On the Doctor's return home he exclaimed to Susan—

“ ‘ I have such a thing to tell you about poor Fan ! ’

“ ‘ Dear sir, what ? ’ and I immediately suppos'd he had spoke to Mrs. Thrale.

“ ‘ Why, to-night, we were sitting at tea—only Johnson, Mrs. Thrale, and me. “ Madam,” cried Johnson, *see-sawing* on his chair, “ Mrs. Chol'mley was talking to me last night of a new novel, which she says has a very uncommon share of merit—*Evelina*. She says she has not been so much entertained this great while as in reading it, and that she shall go all over London in order to discover the author.”

“ ‘ “ Good G—d ! ” cried Mrs. Thrale. “ Why, somebody else mentioned that book to me—Lady Westcote it was, I believe—the *modest writer of Evelina*, she talk'd to me of.”

“ ‘ “ Mrs. Chol'mley says she never met so much modesty with so much *merit* in any literary performance,” said Johnson.

“ ‘ “ Why,” said I, quite coolly and innocently, “ somebody recommended it to *me*, too. I read a little of it, which, indeed, seem'd to

Evelina's Entrance into the World

be above the common-place works of this kind."

" "Well," said Mrs. Thrale, "I'll get it certainly . . ."

" " "You *must* have it, madam," cried Johnson, "for Mrs. Chol'mley says she shall keep it on her table the whole summer, that everybody that knows her may see it—for she says everybody ought to read it." " "

Fanny's joyful response to this letter of Susan's is docketted by her in later years: "Rapturous and most innocent happiness during anonymous success."

Early in July Fanny received a letter from Lowndes, in which he says, "The great World send here to buy *Evelina*. A polite lady said, 'Do, Mr. Lowndes, give me *Evelina*. I'm treated as unfashionable for not having read it.' I think the impression will be sold by Christmas."

She writes to Susan on July 6th—

"Your letter, my dearest Susan, and the enclosed one from Lowndes have flung me into such a vehement perturbation that I hardly can tell whether I wake or dream, and it is even with difficulty that I can fetch my Breath. I have been strolling round the garden 3 or 4 times in hopes of regaining a little quietness. . . . My dear Susy, what a wonderful affair this has been! and how extraordinary is this torrent of

The House in St. Martin's Street

success which sweeps down all before it! I often think it *too much*, nay, almost *wish* it happened to some other person who had more native ambition . . .”

Soon afterwards Dr. Burney confided the secret to Mrs. Thrale, who had already lent the first volume of *Evelina* to Dr. Johnson.

She writes to Dr. Burney: “Dr. Johnson returned home full of the praises of the *Book* I had lent him; and protesting there were passages in it that might do *honour* to Richardson. We talk of it for ever; and he feels ardent after the *dénouement*. I lent him the second volume, which he instantly read, and he is now busy with the other two (*sic*). . . . Long, my dear sir, may you live to enjoy the just praises of your children! and long may they live to deserve and delight such a parent!

“ . . . Give my letter to my little friend, and a warm invitation to come and eat fruit while the season lasts.”

This letter was written on July 22nd. Fanny writes in her Diary immediately afterwards: “I do, indeed, feel the most grateful love for her [Mrs. Thrale]. But Dr. Johnson’s approbation! It almost crazed me with agreeable surprise; it gave me such a flight of spirit that I danced a jig to Mr. Crisp, without any preparation, music, or explanation, to his no small amazement and

Evelina's Entrance into the World

diversion. I left him, however, to make his own comments upon my friskiness without affording him the smallest assistance."

But the time was approaching for Daddy Crisp's enlightenment.

In the month of August Dr. Burney went down to Chesington in order to fetch his daughter home.

"No sooner had the Doctor reached Liberty Hall," writes Fanny,* "than the two faithful old friends were shut up in the *conjuring closet*, where Dr. Burney rushed at once into 'the midst of things,' and disclosed the author of the little work which, for some weeks past, had occupied Chesington Hall with quotations, conjectures, and subject matter of talk." For Fanny had herself read the work aloud to her Daddy Crisp and to his companions, Mrs. Hamilton and Kitty Cooke, much enjoying their remarks and their mystification.

Great and unbounded was the amazement of Crisp on learning that the author was none other than his own "Fannikin," and, for some time, he could only exclaim, "Wonderful—it's wonderful!" Meeting Fanny in the hall soon afterwards, "Why, you little hussy," he cried out, "an't you ashamed to look me in the face, you 'Evelina,' you! Why, what a dance have you led

* See "Memoirs of Dr. Burney."

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me about it! Oh, you little hussy; what tricks have you served me!"

When he could compose himself sufficiently, after his great surprise, to hear the details of the matter, he still "broke out every three instants with exclamations of astonishment at how I had found time to write so much unsuspected, and how and where I had picked up such various materials, and not a few times did he exclaim 'Wonderful!'"



CHAPTER XIII

THRALE PLACE

DR. BURNEY had stopped at Streatham on his way to Chesington, and had settled with Mrs. Thrale that he would call on her again on his way to town, and would carry Fanny with him; and Mrs. Thrale had said, "We all long to know her!"

Fanny writes in her Diary after her return home: "*London, August.*—I have now to write an account of the most consequential day I have spent since my birth: namely, my Streatham visit.

"Our journey to Streatham was the least pleasant part of the day, for . . . I was really in the fidgets from thinking what my reception might be, and from fearing they would expect a less awkward and backward kind of person than I was sure they would find.

"Mr. Thrale's house is white and very pleasantly situated in a fine paddock. Mrs. Thrale was strolling about, and came to us as we got out of the chaise.

The House in St. Martin's Street

“‘Ah,’ cried she, ‘I hear Dr. Burney’s voice! And you have brought your daughter? Well, now you are good!’

“She then received me, taking both my hands, and with mixed politeness and cordiality welcomed me to Streatham. She led me into



THRALE PLACE.

the house and addressed herself almost wholly for a few minutes to my father, as if to give me an assurance she did not mean to regard me as a show, or to distress or frighten me by drawing me out. Afterwards she took me upstairs and showed me the house . . . but though we were some time together . . . she did not *hint* at my book; and I love her much more than ever for her delicacy in

Thrale Place

avoiding a subject which she could not but see would have greatly embarrassed me.

"When we returned to the music-room we found Miss Thrale was with my father. . . . Soon after Mrs. Thrale took me to the library; she talked a little while upon common topics, and then, at last, she mentioned *Evelina*.

"'Yesterday at supper,' said she, 'we talked it all over, and discussed all your characters; but Dr. Johnson's favourite is Mr. Smith. He declares the fine gentleman *manqué* was never better drawn; and he acted him all the evening, saying he was "all for the ladies!" He repeated whole scenes by heart. I declare I was astonished at him. Oh, you can't imagine how much he is pleased with the book.'

"... When we were summoned to dinner Mrs. Thrale made my father and me sit on each side of her. I said that I hoped I did not take Dr. Johnson's place; for he had not yet appeared.

"'No,' answered Mrs. Thrale, 'he will sit by you, which I am sure will give him great pleasure.'

"Soon after we were seated this great man entered and took his place. In the middle of dinner [he] asked Mrs. Thrale what was in some little pies that were near him.

"'Mutton,' answered she; 'so I don't ask you to eat any, because I know you despise it.'

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“‘No, madam, no,’ cried he, ‘I despise nothing that is good of its sort; but I am too proud now to eat of it. Sitting by Miss Burney makes me very proud to-day!’”

After a good deal of amusing talk, Dr. Johnson related an anecdote showing the parsimony of a certain well-known person. “‘And this,’ continued he, ‘reminds me of a gentleman and lady with whom I travelled once; I suppose I must call them gentleman and lady, according to form, because they travelled in their own coach and four horses. But at the first inn where we stopped, the lady called for—a pint of ale! and when it came, quarrelled with the waiter for not giving full measure. Now, Madame Duval could not have done a grosser thing!’

“Oh, how everybody laughed! and to be sure I did not glow at all, nor munch fast, nor look on my plate, nor lose any part of my usual composure! But how grateful do I feel to this dear Dr. Johnson for never naming me and the book as belonging one to the other, and yet making an allusion that showed his thoughts led to it, and, at the same time, that seemed to justify the character as being natural!

“... We left Streatham at about eight o'clock, and Mr. Seward, who handed me into the chaise, added his interest to the rest, that my father would not fail to bring me again next week to

Thrale Place

stay with them some time. In short, I was loaded with civilities from them all. And my ride home was equally happy with the rest of the day, for my kind and most beloved father was so happy in *my* happiness . . . that he could, like myself, think on no other subject."

In a week's time Fanny was again at Streatham, fetched thither by Mrs. Thrale herself, and established as a member of the household.

She writes on Aug. 23rd: "Now for this morning's breakfast.

"Dr. Johnson, as usual, came last into the library; he was in high spirits and full of mirth and sport. I had the honour of sitting next to him, and now, all at once, he flung aside his reserve, thinking perhaps that it was time I should fling aside mine.

"Mrs. Thrale told him that she intended taking me to Mr. T——'s.

" 'So you ought, Madam,' cried he; 'tis your business to be Cicerone to her.'

"Then suddenly he snatched my hand, and kissing it—

" 'Ah!' he added, 'they will little think what a tartar you carry to them. . . . Oh, you are a sly little rogue! What a Holborn beau have you drawn!'

" 'Ay, Miss Burney,' said Mrs. Thrale, 'the

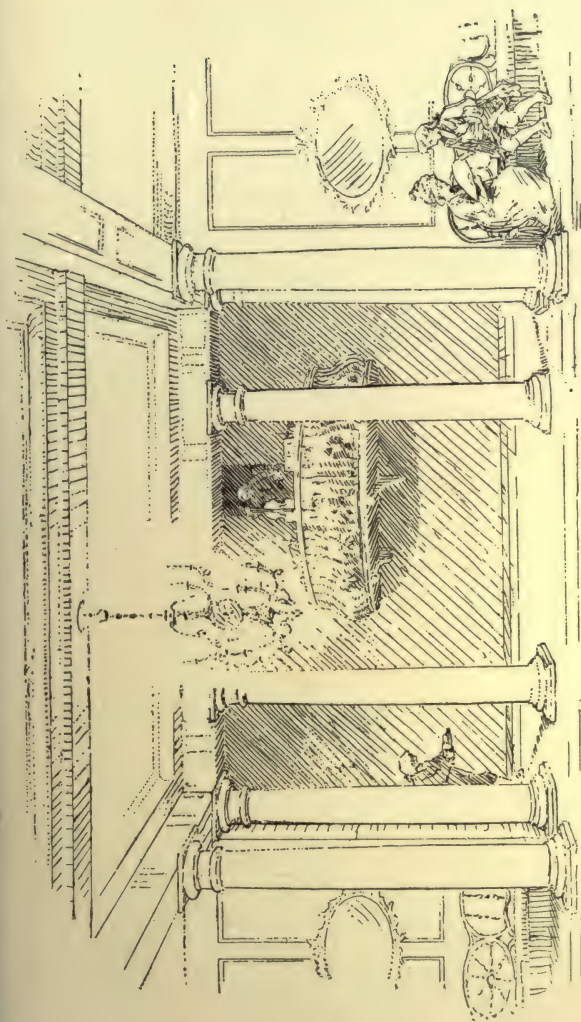
The House in St. Martin's Street

Holborn beau is Dr. Johnson's favourite; and we have all your characters by heart, from Mr. Smith up to Lady Louisa.'

"'Oh, Mr. Smith—Mr. Smith is the man!' cried he, laughing violently. 'Harry Fielding never drew so good a character! such a fine varnish of low politeness! such a struggle to appear a gentleman! Madam, there is no character better drawn anywhere—in any book or by any author.'

"'. . . I know Mr. Smith, too, very well,' cried Mrs. Thrale. 'I always have him before me at the Hampstead Ball, dressed in a white coat and a tambour waistcoat, worked in green silk. Poor Mr. Seward! Mr. Johnson made him so mad t'other day!' 'Why, Seward,' said he, 'how smart you are dressed! Why, you only want a tambour waistcoat to look like Mr. Smith!'"

Readers of *Evelina* will remember the scene alluded to, where poor Mr. Smith is compelled by old Madame Duval to stand up and dance with her in the "Long Room" at Hampstead, to the great amusement of the company. The "Long Room" is still in existence, though it is now divided into a central hall with rooms on either side. A great beam, however, that runs the whole length of the ceiling, proves that the room must have been 75 feet long. There



THE LONG ROOM, HAMPSTEAD.

Thrale Place

are also indications which suggest the spot where the Musicians' Gallery stood.

In the "Memoirs" of her father, Fanny gives an amusing account of her first meeting, while at Streatham, with James Boswell. That gentleman, who had but just returned to town after a long absence in Scotland, had not yet heard either of the existence of *Evelina* or of that of its authoress.

Finding to his surprise his usual seat at the dinner-table next to Dr. Johnson was occupied by Miss Burney, the poor man moved uneasily from chair to chair, returning constantly, on some pretence or other, to the neighbourhood of his hero.

The Doctor, after giving him a sharp rebuke, "muttered half to himself, 'Running about in the middle of meals! One would take you for a Brangton!'

" 'A Brangton, sir?' repeated Boswell, with earnestness; 'what is a Brangton, sir?'

" 'Where have you lived, sir,' cried the Doctor, laughing, 'and what company have you kept, not to know that?'

"Mr. Boswell, now doubly curious . . . said in a low voice, which he knew the Doctor could not hear, to Mrs. Thrale, 'Pray, ma'am, what's a Brangton? Do me the favour to tell me. Is it some animal hereabouts?'

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"Mrs. Thrale only laughed . . . but Mr. Seward cried, 'I'll tell you, Boswell, I'll tell you ! if you will walk with me in the paddock ; only let us wait till the table is cleared, or I shall be taken for a Brangton too !'"

One day Fanny happened to be reading Johnson's Life of Cowley.

" 'Do,' cried [the Doctor], 'put away that now, and prattle with me ; I can't make this little Burney prattle, and I am sure she prattles well.'"

Fanny was certainly no "prattler." Her pleasure was to hear others talk, rather than to talk herself, but her silence had in it, we are told, "every engaging expression of modesty and of intelligent observation." It might, indeed, be said of her, as it was in later years of Madame Récamier, "*elle écoutait avec séduction.*"

" 'To-morrow, sir,' said Mrs. Thrale, 'Mrs. Montagu dines here, and then you will have talk enough.'"

"Dr. Johnson began to see-saw, with a countenance strongly expressive of inward fun, and after enjoying it some time in silence, he suddenly and with great animation turned to me and cried—

" 'Down with her, Burney ! down with her ! spare her not ! attack her, fight her, and down with her at once ! You are a rising wit, and she is at the top ; and when I was beginning the

Thrale Place

world, and was nothing and nobody, the joy of my life was to fire at all the established wits! and then everybody loved to halloo me on. . . . So at her, Burney—at her, and down with her!’

“ ‘Miss Burney,’ cried Mr. Thrale, ‘you must get up your courage for this encounter! I think you should begin with Miss Gregory,* and down with her first.’

“ *Dr. J.* : ‘No, no; always fly at the eagle! Down with Mrs. Montagu herself! I hope she will come full of *Evelina*.’ ”

Dr. Johnson sometimes enjoyed a sly joke at Mrs. Montagu’s expense, but he said of her one day, “She diffuses more knowledge in her conversation than any woman I know, or indeed almost any man.”

Fanny, writing of the lady’s visit after it had taken place, remarks, “Mrs. Montagu is middle-sized and very thin, and looks infirm: she has a sensible and penetrating countenance, and the air and manner of a woman accustomed to being distinguished and of great parts. . . . She had not been in the room ten minutes, ere, turning to Mrs. Thrale, she said—

“ ‘Oh, ma’am, but your *Evelina*—I have not yet got it. I sent for it, but the book-seller had it not. However, I will certainly have it.’

* Miss Gregory lived with Mrs. Montagu.

The House in St. Martin's Street

“‘Ay, I hope so,’ answered Mrs. Thrale, ‘and I hope you will like it, too; for ’tis a book to be liked.’ And here she opened out into a panegyric upon the book, informing Mrs. Montagu that ‘Burke had sat up all night to read it,’ that ‘Sir Joshua Reynolds had been offering fifty pounds to know the author,’ and that ‘Dr. Johnson had declared that Fielding never wrote so well—never equal to this book.’

“‘Indeed!’ cried Mrs. Montagu; ‘that I did not expect, for I have been informed it is the work of a young lady, and, therefore, though I expected a very pretty book, I supposed it to be a work of mere imagination. . . .’

“‘Well, ma’am,’ rejoined Mrs. Thrale, ‘what I tell you is literally true; and, for my part, I am never better pleased than when good girls write clever books—and that this is clever—— But all this time we are killing Miss Burney, who wrote the book herself.’

“What a clap of thunder was this!—the last thing in the world I should have expected before my face! I know not what bewitched Mrs. Thrale. . . . All *retenue* being now at an end, I fairly and abruptly took to my heels, and ran out of the room with the utmost trepidation, amidst astonished exclamations from Mrs. Montagu and Miss Gregory. . . . When dinner was upon table I followed the procession, in a tragedy step,

Thrale Place

as Mr. Thrale will have it, into the dining-room. Dr. Johnson was returned."

Mrs. Montagu's new house in Portman Square being talked of, the lady expressed a wish to see all the company present at her house-warming to be given during the ensuing Spring.

"Everybody bowed and accepted the invite but me," writes Fanny, "and I thought fitting not to hear it. . . . But Dr. Johnson, who sat next to me, was determined I should be of the party, for he suddenly clapped his hand on my shoulder and called out aloud—

"‘Little Burney, you and I will go together!’

"‘Yes, surely,’ cried Mrs. Montagu, ‘I shall hope for the pleasure of seeing *Evelina*.’

"‘*Evelina*!’ repeated he: ‘has Mrs. Montagu then found out *Evelina*?’

"‘Yes,’ cried she, ‘and I am proud of it; I am proud that a work so commended should be a woman’s.’

"Oh, how my face burnt! . . . Some other things were said, but I remember them not, for I could hardly keep my place; but my sweet, naughty Mrs. Thrale looked delighted for me.

"I made tea as usual, and Mrs. Montagu and Miss Gregory seated themselves on each side of me.

"‘I can see,’ said the former, ‘that Miss

The House in St. Martin's Street

Burney is very like her father, and that is a good thing, for everybody would wish to be like Dr. Burney!"

The concluding sentences of this scene are given by Fanny in an unpublished portion of a journal-letter to her sister Susan.*

"Some time afterwards," writes Fanny, "Mrs. Montagu mentioned her being very short-sighted. . . . Mrs. Thrale said, 'Miss Burney, ma'am, knows how to allow for that, for she is very near-sighted herself.'

" 'I should be glad,' answered Mrs. Montagu, 'to resemble Miss Burney in anything.'

" 'Pon my word! methinks I hear you cry, 'Fine doings!' Miss Gregory was amazingly sociable, and began regretting my spending the morning away from them. . . . 'It was very hard upon *us*,' and *all that* . . . and civilities ran about very thick and very soft."

From this time forth Fanny spent a large portion of her time at Streatham, where its mistress and its constant visitor, Dr. Johnson, became more and more attached to her.

The Doctor, who was much more observant of people's appearance than we should have supposed, remarked one day, after looking earnestly at Fanny, "It's very handsome!"

" 'What, sir?' cried I, amazed.

* Burney MSS.

Thrale Place

“‘Why, your cap:—I have looked at it some time, and I like it much. It has not that vile bandeau across it which I have so often cursed. . . .’

“*Mrs. T.*: ‘Lady Ladd* never wore the bandeau, and said she never would, because it is unbecoming.’ . . .

“*Dr. J.*: ‘Why, if anybody could have worn the bandeau, it must have been Lady Ladd, for there is enough of her to carry it off; but you are too little for anything ridiculous; that which seems nothing upon a Patagonian will become very conspicuous upon a Lilliputian, and of you there is so little in all, that one single absurdity would swallow up half of you.’”

There is a little anecdote of Dr. Johnson recorded on a loose piece of paper among the Burney MSS. to the following effect. The Doctor, it seems, had been showing a young bride, who was paying a morning call at Streatham, the various “lions” of the Park. “He then asked whether she had been introduced to Miss Burney. ‘No,’ but she very much wished it.

“‘Ah, child,’ said he, ‘I don’t know that an introduction to Miss Burney would do you much good, for you look as if you took more pains with the outside of your head than the inside.’ Then,

* Sometimes spelt “Lade.”

The House in St. Martin's Street

seemingly conscious that he had spoken rudely and unprovoked, he added, 'And your time has not been thrown away, for it is a very pretty head, and very well dressed.' "

Fanny was again at home in the autumn of 1778, and Mrs. Thrale, who was then staying at Tunbridge Wells, writes to Dr. Burney—

"Miss Burney is naughty, and does not send a line even to say, 'All's well,' or else I would tell her how *Evelina* was the popular Book upon the Walks all summer; how some were talking of Madame Duval as they run up and down the pantiles; and some of the Captain; how Mrs. Crewe is delighted that your Daughter is the Author, and how she and I talk of you and yours all Day long." *

* Burney MSS.



CHAPTER XIV

A GREAT PAINTER AND HIS FRIENDS

ON a certain Saturday early in January, 1779, we find Fanny, accompanied by her father and mother, at a gathering in Sir Joshua Reynolds' house—a house which is still to be seen, standing on the western side of Leicester Square. The drawing-room, where the guests must have been received, lies on the first floor, its three tall, recessed windows looking to the front.

We can fancy we see the gay company ascending the broad marble staircase, which leads to the parlours, with its quaint, bowed balustrades, so shaped, it seems, to allow space for the ladies' hoops. But at the period of which we are writing, hoops were little worn, except at Court. The dress of the ladies was graceful and flowing, such as we see in the contemporary portraits by Reynolds and Gainsborough.

Fanny, in describing the party, writes of her kindly host: "His behaviour was exactly what my wishes would have dictated to him for my

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own ease and quietness, for he never once even alluded to my book, but conversed rationally, gaily, and serenely ; and so I became more comfortable than I had been ever since the first entrance of company.

"[Presently] by a change of seats," she continues, "I was next to Mrs. Horneck, who, after some general conversation with me, said, in a low voice—

" 'I suppose, Miss Burney, I must not speak of *Evelina* to you?'

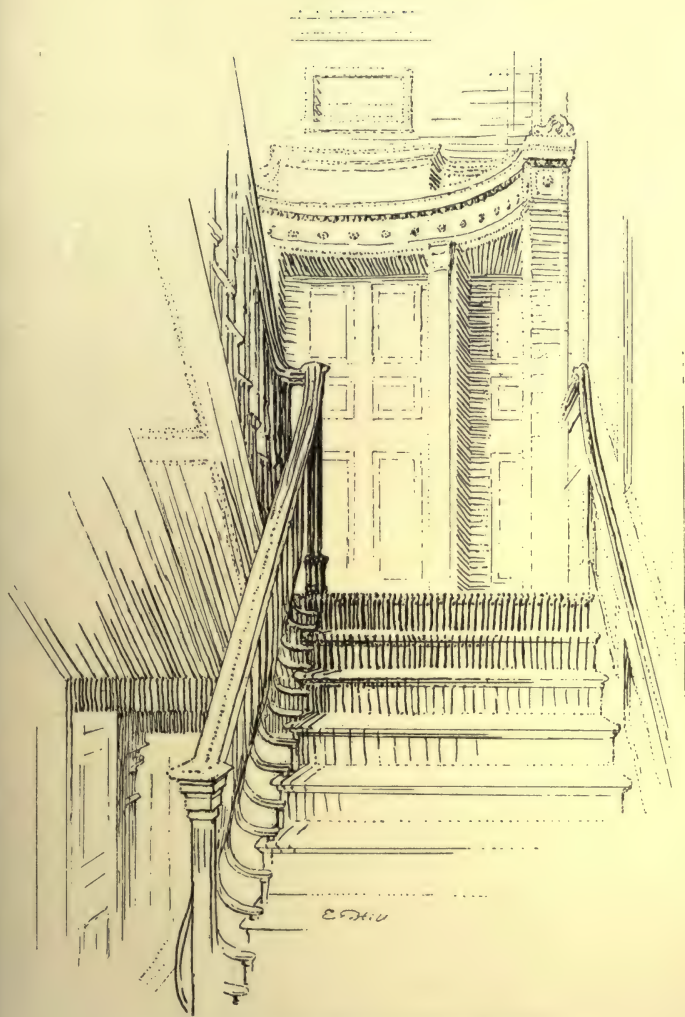
" 'Why, indeed, ma'am,' said I, 'I would rather you should speak of anything else.'

" 'Well I must only beg leave to say one thing, which is, that my daughters had the credit of first introducing it into this set. . . . But where, Miss Burney, where can, or could, you pick up such characters? Where find such variety of incidents, yet all so natural?'

" 'Oh, ma'am, anybody might find who thought them worth looking for.'

* " 'I recommended [the book] to Lady Carysfort, a very sensible woman, and she sat up the whole night to read it. And then we prevailed with Sir Joshua to read it,—and when he once began it he left it neither for sleep nor food, for, to own the truth, he took to it yet more passionately than all the rest of us!'

* This paragraph is taken from the Burney MSS.



STAIRCASE IN SIR JOSHUA REYNOLDS' HOUSE.



A Great Painter and his Friends

It was at this party that Fanny met Mrs. Cholmondeley—the “Mad Cap Mrs. Cholmondeley,” as Crisp calls her—for the first time after that lady’s learning that she was the authoress of *Evelina*. Mrs. Cholmondeley was so eager in her repeated questions about the novel, and so blind to poor Fanny’s distress, that Sir Joshua, taking hold of her arm, endeavoured to pull her away, saying, “Come, come, Mrs. Cholmondeley, I won’t have her overpowered here.”

“But Mrs. Cholmondeley, turning to him, said, with quickness and vehemence, ‘Why, I ain’t going to kill her! Don’t be afraid.’

“... I got away from her,” says Fanny, “and looked over Miss Palmer’s cards, but she was after me in a moment.

“‘Pray, Miss Burney,’ cried she aloud, ‘do you know anything of this game?’

“‘No, ma’am.’

“‘No?’ repeated she. ‘*Ma foi*, that’s pity!’

“This raised such a laugh I was forced to move on. . . . Mrs. Cholmondeley hunted me quite round the card-table, from chair to chair, repeating various speeches of Madame Duval; and when, at last, I got behind a sofa, out of her reach, she called out aloud, ‘Polly, Polly! only think! Miss has danced with a lord!’”

Fanny’s next meeting with Mrs. Cholmondeley was of a more agreeable kind. It was in the

The House in St. Martin's Street

lady's own house in Hertford Street, whither she had gone by invitation, together with Dr. and Mrs. Burney.

"We were received by Mrs. Cholmondeley," she writes, "with great politeness, and in a manner that showed she intended to entirely throw aside Madame Duval, and to conduct herself towards me in a new style. . . . She is determined, I believe, to make me like her; and she will, I believe, have full success; for she is very clever, very entertaining, and very much unlike anybody else."

Presently Mr. Sheridan's name was announced, and after the introductions had been gone through, "he proceeded," writes Fanny, "to speak of *Evelina* in terms of the highest praise; but I was in such a ferment from surprise (not to say pleasure), that I have no recollection of his expressions. I only remember telling him that I was much amazed he had spared time to read it, and that he repeatedly called it a most surprising book and [then exclaimed], 'But I hope, Miss Burney, you don't intend to throw away your pen?'"

Soon afterwards, turning to Sir Joshua, "Mr. Sheridan said—

"'Sir Joshua, I have been telling Miss Burney that she must not suffer her pen to be idle—ought she?'"

A Great Painter and his Friends

“*Sir Joshua* : ‘ No, indeed ought she not.’

“*Mr. Sheridan* : ‘ I think and say she ought to write a comedy.’

“*Sir Joshua* : ‘ I am sure I think so ; and I hope she will.’

“ I could only answer by incredulous exclamations.

“ ‘ Consider,’ continued *Sir Joshua*, ‘ you have already had all the applause and fame you can have given you in the closet ; but the acclamation of a theatre will be new to you.’

“ And then he put down his trumpet, and began a violent clapping of his hands.”

Fanny has recorded another conversation of a similar nature that took place in *Sir Joshua Reynolds’* country house on Richmond Hill, where for the first time she met Edmund Burke.

After giving a tribute of warm praise to *Evelina*, the orator remarked with a smile : “ ‘ We have had an age for statesmen, an age for heroes, an age for poets, an age for artists, but *this*,’ bowing [to me] with an air of obsequious gallantry . . . ‘ *this* is the age for women !’

“ ‘ A very happy modern improvement !’ cried *Sir Joshua*, laughing, ‘ don’t you think so, Miss Burney ?—but that’s not a fair question to put to you ; so we won’t make a point of your answering it. However, what *Mr. Burke* said is very true. The women begin to make a figure in everything,

The House in St. Martin's Street

though I remember when I first came into the world it was thought but a poor compliment to say a person did a thing like a lady !'

" 'Ay, Sir Joshua,' cried Dr. Burney, 'but like Molière's physician, *nous avons changé tout cela* !'

" 'Now,' interrupted Mr. Burke warmly, 'to talk of writing like a lady is the greatest compliment that need be wished for by a man !' Then archly shrugging his shoulders, he added, 'What is left now exclusively for US, and what we are to devise in our own defence, I know not ! We seem to have nothing for it but assuming a sovereign contempt, for the next most dignified thing to possessing merit is an heroic barbarism in despising it !' "

Fanny's entrance into the great literary world as one of its members was hailed with delight by her "Daddy" Crisp. He writes to her at this time—

"I long of all things to see the continuation of your Journal. If you answer me you have not continued it, you are unpardonable, and I advise you to set about it immediately as well as you can while any trace of it remains in your memory. It will one day," he adds prophetically, "be the delight of your old age—it will call back your youth, your spirits, your pleasures, your friends (at that time probably long gone off the stage), and lastly, when your own scene is closed, remain a valuable treasure for those that come after you."

CHAPTER XV

"THE WITLINGS"

WE have seen that the great Sheridan himself advised Miss Burney to write for the stage, and in the mean time her friends at Streatham were urging the same counsel.

In an unpublished letter from Mrs. Thrale to Fanny, dated December, 1778, the writer says : "Sheridan has really behaved with great politeness ; pity to let it cool, I think, and Mr. Johnson says so too. The Stage is certainly the high road to riches and to fame, and the *broad-wheeled waggons* which have gone over it lately will only have rolled it smooth, I hope, for our elegant *Vis-à-vis*." *

When Fanny was introduced to Mr. Murphy, the dramatist, he remarked to her with a shrewd look, "If I had written a certain book—a book I

* "A narrow coach, in which only two persons can sit facing each other, seldom used by any other than persons of high character or fashion." See Felton's "Treatise on Carriages," 1795.

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won't name, but a book I have lately read, I would next write a Comedy. . . . Comedy is the fort of that book . . . and if the author—I won't say who—will write a comedy, I will most readily and with great pleasure give any advice or assistance in my power."

Mrs. Montagu, too, had thrown the weight of her opinion into the scale, for she had observed to Mrs. Thrale, "If Miss Burney does write a play, I beg I may know of it, and if she thinks proper, see it; and all my influence is at her service."

But Fanny's shrewd adviser at Chesington gave her a word of warning.

"I plainly foresaw," he writes, "that as your next step you would be urged, strongly urged, by your many friends and admirers to undertake a comedy. I think you capable, highly capable of it, but in the attempt there are great difficulties in the way; some more particularly in the way of a Fanny than of most people."

After describing the nature of the lively sallies, bordering on coarseness, then in vogue on the stage, he goes on to say: "The sum total amounts to this; it appears to me extremely difficult throughout a whole spirited comedy, to steer clear of those agreeable, frolicsome *jeux d'esprit* on the one hand, and languor and heaviness on the other:—pray observe, I only say

“The Witlings”

difficult—not impracticable—at least to your dexterity ; and to that I leave it.

“ . . . I am very glad that you have secured Mrs. Montagu for your friend ; her weight and interest are powerful ; but there is one particular I do not relish ; though she means it as a mark of favour and distinction ;—it is where she says, ‘ If Miss Burney does write a play, I beg I may know of it, and (if she thinks proper) see it.’

“ Now, Fanny, this same seeing it (in a professed female wit, authoress, and Mæcenas into the bargain) I fear implies too much interference—implies advising, correcting, altering, &c., &c., &c. ; not only so but in so high a critic, the not submitting to such grand authority might possibly give a secret, concealed, lurking offense. Now d’ye see. . . . I would have the whole be all my own—all of a piece ; and to tell you the truth, I would not give a pin for the advice of the ablest friend who would not suffer me at last to follow my own judgment without resentment.”

At the end of this letter there follows, in the original manuscript, a passage in which Crisp humorously supposes a dialogue between himself and Fanny— *

“ *Crisp* : ‘ Most likely, Fanny, this tedious homily must have tired you.’

* Burney MSS.

The House in St. Martin's Street

"*Fanny*: 'If you think so why did you write it?'

"*Crisp*: 'I don't know; it came into my head; and as I told you once before on a former occasion, I have no notion of reserve among Friends.'

"*Fanny*: 'You think then I have need of all this tutoring, and that I can't see my way without *your* old Spectacles?'

"*Crisp*: 'No, no, Fanny. I think no such thing,—besides, you have other sorts of Spectacles at Streatham to put on if you should want them, but you know old men are much given to garrulity, and old Daddys particularly that have been long used to prate, don't know how to give over in time.'

"*Fanny*: 'Well, well, prithee have done now.'

"*Crisp*: 'Allow'd. Agree'd. God bless you, Adieu.'"

Fanny did write a play after all, which she called "The Witlings," and which was finished by the summer of 1779. She received unbounded sympathy in her undertaking from her Streatham friends, and notably from the great Dr. Johnson, who had become warmly attached to his "little Burney." Still Fanny had her secret doubts of success in this new walk of literature, and of all her advisers she looked to her "two Daddies" to give the final judgment upon her work.

“The Witlings”

On July 30th her father and her sister Susan were starting for Chesington, and Fanny writes to Mr. Crisp: “As to the play . . . I own I had wished to be the bearer of it when I visit Chesington; but you seem so urgent, and my father, himself, is so desirous to carry it to you, that I have given that plan up.

“. . . And now let me tell you what I wish in regard to this affair. I should like that your first reading should have nothing to do with me—that you should go quick through it, or let my father read it to you—forgetting all the time, as much as you can, that Fannikin is the writer, or even that it is a play in manuscript, and capable of alterations; and then, when you have done, I should like to have three lines, telling me, as nearly as you can trust my candour, its general effect. After that take it to your own desk, and lash it at your leisure.”

In Susan Burney's unpublished diaries and letters,* we find an account of the reading of Fanny's play to the assembled household at Chesington. That household, we would explain, consisted of Mr. Crisp, his sister Mrs. Gast, and bright little Charlotte Burney, both of whom were then staying in the house; the humble, kindly Mrs. Hamilton, and her younger companion, the good-tempered, blundering Kitty Cooke.

* Burney MSS.

The House in St. Martin's Street

Susan writes to her sister on Tuesday, August 3rd, "We all assembled soon after breakfast into Mrs. Gast's room, and my Father, pleased, he said, to see so *respectable an audience* began the Piece.

"*The Wittlings*. 'Good,' said Mr. Crisp—'good—I like the name'—the *Dramatis Personæ*, too, pleased him, and the name of Codger occasioned a general grin. . . . The Milliner's Scene and indeed all the first Act diverted us *extremely* all round. 'It's funny—it's funny indeed,' said Mr. C., who you know does not love to throw away praise. The second Act . . . did not flag at all in the reading; the 3rd is charming—and they all went off with great spirit.

"Here my Father's voice was so tired that we were obliged to stop. . . . Soon after supper was over, however, we returned to our station.

"The fourth Act was, upon the whole, that which seemed least to exhilarate, or interest, the audience, though Charlotte laughed, till she was almost black in the face, at Codger's part, as I had done before her. The fifth was more generally felt but, to own the truth, it did not meet all the advantages one could wish. My Father's voice, sight and lungs were tired. . . . Yet he exerted himself in the warmest manner throughout the Piece to give it force and spirit, and except this Act, I believe only yourself would have read the play better.

“The Witlings”

“For my own part the serious parts seemed even to improve upon me by this 2nd hearing, and made me for to cry in 2 or 3 places. I wish there was more of this sort—so does my Father—so I *believe* does Mr. Crisp. . . . Codger and Jack seem characters which divert every body, and would yet more, I should imagine, in a public representation. . . . All the *sensible* ones are struck with Censor’s character, tho’ nobody delights Charlotte like Mr. Codger.”

In spite of its many good characters and spirited dialogue, the verdict pronounced upon *The Witlings* by both Mr. Crisp and Dr. Burney, was adverse. Each felt that the authoress of “Evelina” had too much to lose to risk the possibility of failure or even of a partial success. How Fanny bore her keen disappointment is shown by the following letters :—

“The fatal knell then is knolled,” she writes to her father, “and ‘down among the dead men’ sink the poor *Witlings*—for ever and for ever and for ever !

“I give a sigh, whether I will or not, to their memory ! for however worthless they were *mes enfans*, and one must do one’s nature as Mr. Crisp will tell you of the dog.

“. . . I am sure I speak from the bottom of my honest heart when I most solemnly declare that upon your account any disgrace would

The House in St. Martin's Street

mortify and afflict me more than upon my own.

“ . . . You bid me open my heart to you,—and so my dearest sir, I will, for it is the greatest happiness of my life that I dare to be sincere to you. I expected many objections to be raised—a thousand errors to be pointed out—and a million of alterations to be proposed: but the suppression of the piece were words I did not expect. . . . But . . . the best way I can take of showing that I have a true sense of the spirit of your condemnation, is not to sink sulky and dejected under it, but to exert myself to the utmost of my power in endeavours to produce something less reprehensible.”

Her letter to Crisp is in a lighter vein.

“ Well ! ‘ there are plays that are to be saved, and plays that are not to be saved,’ so good night, Mr. Dabler ! Good night, Lady Smatter,—Mrs. Sapient,—Mrs. Voluble,—Mrs. Wheedle,—Censor,—Cecilia,—Beaufort, and you, you great oaf,—Bobby ! Good night ! good night !

“ And good morning, Miss Fanny Burney !—I hope now you have opened your eyes for some time, and will not close them in so drowsy a fit again,—at least till the full of the moon.

“ . . . The only bad thing in this affair, is that I cannot take the comfort of my poor friend Dabler, by calling you a crabbed fellow, because

“The Witlings”

you write with almost more kindness than ever; neither can I (though I try hard) persuade myself that you have not a grain of taste in your whole composition.

“This, however, seriously I do believe, that when my two daddies put their heads together to concert for me that hissing, groaning, cat-calling epistle they sent me, they felt as sorry for poor little Miss Bayes* as she could possibly do for herself.

“. . . Adieu, my dear daddy, I won't be mortified, and I won't be *downed*;—but I will be proud to find I have, out of my own family, as well as in it, a friend who loves me well enough to speak plain truth to me.”

* * * * *

The original manuscript of the *Witlings* has been placed in our hands. It consists of five acts, each act forming one scene only. We have read the play with much interest and amusement, though recognizing some of the drawbacks which struck Dr. Burney and Mr. Crisp so forcibly. We think a specimen of the bright dialogue will interest our readers, and we therefore give the following scene. It deals with a meeting of the “Esprit Club,” in which the affected imitators of the learned ladies of the day are ridiculed. Mrs. Thrale used to declare, laughingly, that

* A character in the *Rehearsal*.

The House in St. Martin's Street
she was sure Lady Smatter was intended for
herself.

Mr. Dabler, we would explain, is a conceited
poet of mean attainments.

THE WITLINGS.

ACT IV.

A Library at Lady Smatter's.

Lady Smatter, Mrs. Sapient, Dabler, and Codger,
seated at a round table covered with Books.

Lady Smatter. Now before we begin our
Literary Subjects, allow me to remind you of
the rule established at our last Meeting, that
everyone is to speak his real sentiments, and no
flattery is to taint our discussions.

All. Agreed.

Lady Smatter. This is the smallest assembly
we have had yet; some or other of our members
fail us every Time.

Dabler. But where such luminaries are seen
as Lady Smatter and Mrs. Sapient, all others
could only appear to be eclipsed.

Lady Smatter. What have you brought to
regale us with to-night, Mr. Dabler?

Dabler. Me? dear Madam, nothing!

“The Witlings”

Lady Smatter. Oh barbarous!

Mrs. Sapient. Surely you cannot have been so cruel? for, in *my* opinion, to give pain causelessly is rather disobliging.

Dabler. Dear Ladies, you know you may command me; but, I protest, I don't think I have anything worth your hearing.

Lady Smatter. Let us judge for ourselves. Bless me, Mr. Codger, how insensible you are! why do not you join in our intreaties?

Codger. For what, Madam?

Lady Smatter. For a Poem, to be sure.

Codger. Madam, I understood Mr. Dabler he had nothing worth your hearing.

Lady Smatter. But surely you do not believe him?

Codger. I know no reason, Madam, to doubt him.

Lady Smatter. O you Goth! come, dear Mr. Dabler, produce something at once, if only to shame him.

Dabler. Your Ladyship has but to speak.
(*Takes a paper from his pocket-book, and reads.*)

ON A CERTAIN PARTY OF BEAUX ESPRITS.

Learning, here, doth pitch her Tent,
Science, here, her Seeds doth Scatter;
Learning, in form of Sapient,
Science, in guise of heav'nly Smatter.

The House in St. Martin's Street

Lady Smatter. O charming ! beautiful Lines, indeed.

Mrs. Sapient. Elegant and poignant to a degree !

Lady Smatter. What do *you* think, Mr. Codger, of this Poem ? To be sure (*whispering him*) the compliment to Mrs. Sapient is preposterously overstrained, but, otherwise, nothing can be more perfect.

Mrs. Sapient. Mr. Dabler has, indeed, the happiest turn in the World at easy elegance. Why, Mr. Codger, you don't speak a Word ? (*Whispering him*) Pray, between friends, what say you to the notion of making Lady Smatter represent Science ? Don't you think he has been rather unskilful in his choice ?

Codger. Why, Madam, you give me no Time to think at all.

Lady Smatter. Well, now to other matters. I have a little observation to offer upon a Line of Pope ; he says—

“ Most Women have no character at all.”

Now I should be glad to know, if this was true in the Time of Pope, why People should complain so much of the depravity of the present Age ?

Dabler. Your Ladyship has asked a Question that might perplex a Solomon.

“The Witlings”

Mrs. Sapient. It is, indeed, surprisingly ingenious.

Dabler. Yes, and it reminds me of a little foolish thing which I composed some time ago.

Lady Smatter. O pray let us hear it.

Dabler. Your Ladyship commands—

The lovely Iris, young and fair,
Possess'd each charm of Face and Hair
That with the Cyprian's might compare ;
So sweet her Face, so soft her Mind,
So mild she speaks,—she looks so kind,—
To hear, might melt ! to see, might blind !

Lady Sm. } { O elegant! enchanting! delicious!
Mrs. Sap. } together { O delightful! pathetic! delicate!

Lady Smatter. Why Mr. Codger, have you no Soul ? is it possible you can be unmoved by such poetry as this ?

Codger. I was considering, Madam, what might be the allusion to which Mr. Dabler referred, when he said he was reminded of this little foolish thing, as he was pleased to call it himself.

Dabler (aside). I should like to toss that old fellow in a blanket !

Codger. Now, Sir, be so good as to gratify me by relating what may be the connection between your Song, and the foregoing Conversation ?

The House in St. Martin's Street

Dabler (*pettishly*). Sir, I only meant to read it to the Ladies.

Lady Smatter. I'm sure you did us great honour. Mrs. Sapient, the next proposition is yours.

Mrs. Sapient. Pray did your Ladyship ever read Dryden?

Lady Smatter. Dryden? O yes!—but I don't just now recollect him;—let's see, what has he writ?

Dabler. Cymon and Iphigenia.

Lady Smatter. O ay, so he did; and really for the Time of Day I think it's mighty pretty.

Dabler. Why yes, it's well enough; but it would not do now.

Mrs. Sapient. Pray what does your Ladyship think of the Spectator?

Lady Smatter. O, I like it vastly. I've just read it.

Codger (*to Lady Smatter*). In regard, Madam, to those verses of Mr. Dabler, the chief fault I have to find with them, is——

Dabler. Why, Sir, we are upon another subject now! (*Aside*) What an old Curmudgeon! he has been pondering all this Time only to find fault!

Mrs. Sapient. For *my* part, I have always thought that the best papers in the Spectator are those of Addison.

“ The Witlings ”

Lady Smatter. Very justly observed !

Dabler. Charmingly said ! exactly my own opinion.

Mrs. Sapient. Nay, I may be mistaken ; I only offer it as my private sentiment.

Dabler. I can but wish, Madam, that poor Addison had lived to hear such praise.

Lady Smatter. Next to Mr. Dabler, my favourite Poets are Pope and Swift.

Mrs. Sapient. Well, after all, I must confess I think there are as many pretty things in old Shakespeare as in anybody.

Lady Smatter. Yes, but he is too common ; every body can speak well of Shakespeare !

Dabler. I vow I am quite sick of his Name.

Codger. Madam, to the best of my apprehension, I conceive your Ladyship hath totally mistaken that Line of Pope which says—

Most women have no Character at all.

Lady Smatter. Mistaken, I, how so, Sir ? This is curious enough ! (*Aside to Dabler*) I begin to think the poor creature is superannuated.

Dabler. So do I, Ma'am ; I have observed it for some Time.

Codger. By no Character, Madam, he only means——

Lady Smatter. A bad Character, to be sure !

The House in St. Martin's Street

Codger. There, Madam, lieth your Ladyship's mistake ; he means, I say——

Lady Smatter. O dear Sir, don't trouble yourself to tell *me* his meaning ;—I dare say I shall be able to make it out.

Mrs. Sapient (aside to Dabler). How irritable is her Temper !

Dabler. O intolerably !

Codger. Your Ladyship, Madam, will not hear me. I was going——

Lady Smatter. If you please, Sir, we'll drop the Subject, for I rather fancy you will give me no very new information concerning it,—do you think he will, Mr. Dabler ?

Codger. Mr. Dabler, Madam, is not a competent Judge of the case, as——

Dabler (rising). Not a Judge, Sir ? not a Judge of Poetry ?

Codger. Not in the present circumstance, Sir, because, as I was going to say——

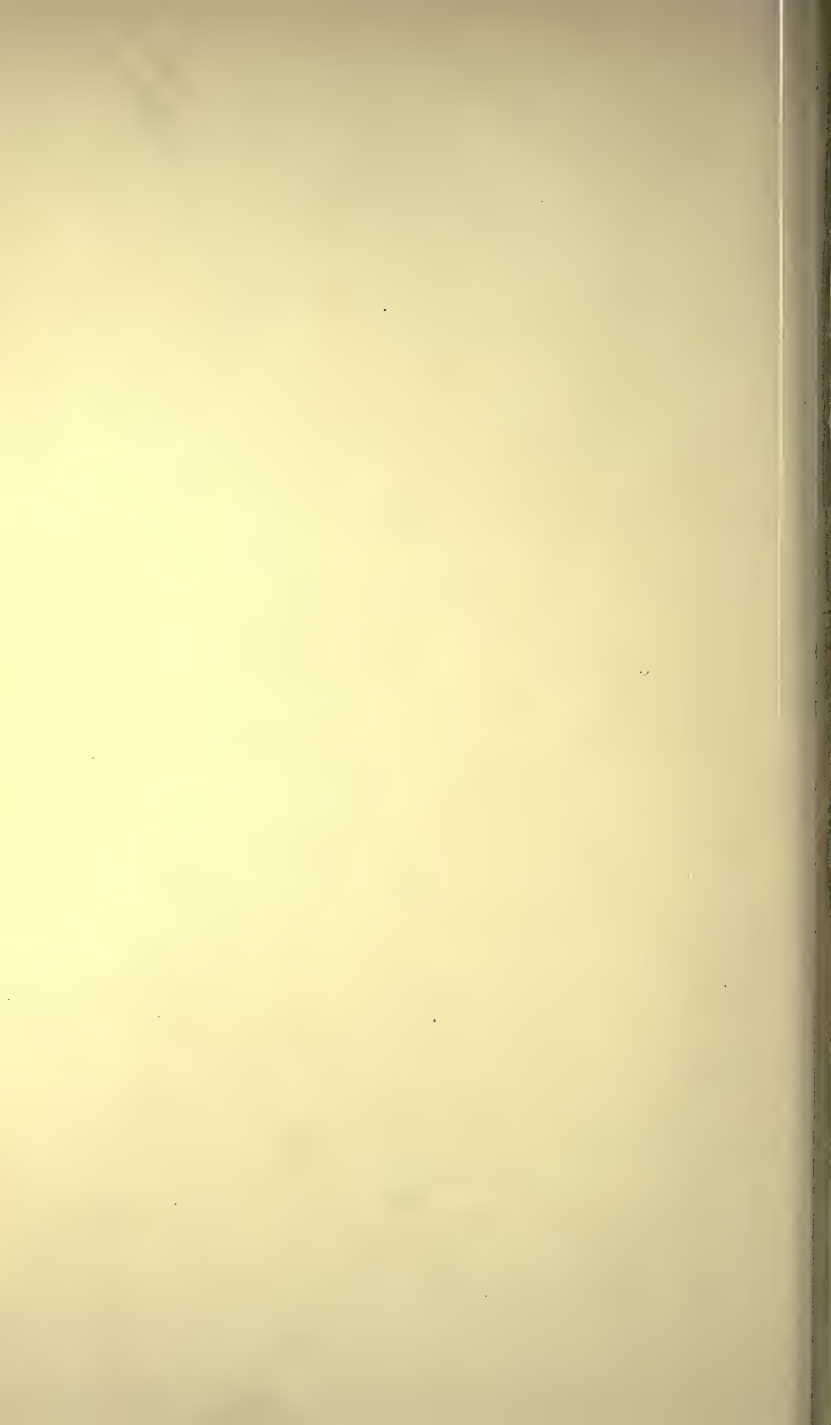
Dabler. Nay then, Sir, I'm sure I'm a Judge of Nothing !

Codger. That may be, Sir, but is not to the present purpose ; I was going——

Dabler. Suppose, Sir, we refer to the Ladies ? Pray now, Ladies, which do *you* think the most adequate Judge of Poetry, Mr. Codger or your humble Servant ? Speak sincerely, for I hate flattery.



THE ESPRIT CLUB.



“The Witlings”

Mrs. Sapient. I would by no means be so ill bred as to determine for Mr. Dabler in the presence of Mr. Codger, because *I* have always thought that a preference of one person implies less approbation of another ; yet——

Codger. Pray, Madam, let me speak ; the reason, I say——

Mrs. Sapient. Yet the well known skill of Mr. Dabler in this delightful art——

Codger. Madam, this interruption is somewhat injudicious, since it prevents my explaining——

Mrs. Sapient (rising). Injudicious, Sir ? I am sorry, indeed, if I have merited such an accusation : there is nothing I have more scrupulously endeavoured to avoid, for, in *my* opinion, to be injudicious is no mark of an extraordinary understanding.

Lady Smatter (aside to Dabler). How soon she's hurt !

Dabler. O most unreasonably !

Codger. Madam, you will never hear me out ; you prevent my explaining the reason, I say, why Mr. Dabler cannot decide upon Lady Smatter's error in judgement——

Lady Smatter (rising). Error in judgement ? really this is very diverting !

Codger. I say, Madam——

Lady Smatter. Nay, Sir, 'tis no great matter ;

The House in St. Martin's Street

and yet, I must confess, it's rather a hard case that, after so many years of intense study, and most laborious reading, I am not allowed to criticise a silly line of Pope.

Dabler. And if I, who, from infancy, have devoted all my Time to the practice of Poetry, am now thought to know nothing of the matter—I should be glad to be informed who has a better Title?

Mrs. Sapient. And if I, who, during my whole life, have made propriety my peculiar study, am now found to be deficient in it,—I must really take the liberty to observe that I must have thrown away a great deal of Time to very little purpose.

Lady Smatter. And as to this line of Pope—

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Enter Censor.

Lady Smatter. Mr. Censor, your entrance is most critically fortunate; give me leave to present you to our society.

Censor. I expected to have seen your Ladyship alone.

Lady Smatter. Yes, but I have obtained a dispensation for your admittance to our Esprit Party. But let us not waste our Time in common conversation. You must know we are at present discussing a very knotty point, and I

“The Witlings”

should be glad of your opinion upon the merits of the cause.

Dabler. Yes; and as soon as that is decided, I have a little choice piece of Literature to communicate to you which I think you will allow to be tolerable.

Mrs. Sapient. And I, too, Sir, must take the liberty to appeal to your Judgement concerning——

Censor. Ay, ay, Speak all at a Time, and then one hearing may do.

Lady Smatter. Mr. Censor, when a point of the last importance is in agitation, such levity as this——

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Dabler. I was going to tell you, Mr. Censor, that if you have any desire to look at those verses I was speaking of, I believe I have a Copy of them in my Pocket. Let's see,—yes, here they are; how lucky that I should happen to have them about me! (*Gives them to Censor.*) (*Aside*) I think they will surprise him.

Censor (reading)—

That passion which we strongest feel

We all agree to disapprove;

Yet feebly, feebly, we conceal——

Dabler (pettishly). Sir, you read without any spirit——

Yet feebly,—feebly we conceal.

The House in St. Martin's Street

You should drop your voice at the Second feebly, or you lose all the effect. (*Aside*) It puts me in a fever to hear such fine lines murdered.

Censor (*reading*).

We all are bound slaves to self love.

Dabler (*snatching the paper*). Why you give it neither emphasis nor expression! You read as if you were asleep. (*Reading*)—

That passion which——

Censor. O no more, no more of it. Pray who is the Author?

Dabler. Why really I—I don't absolutely know,—but, by what I have heard, I should take it to be somebody very,—very clever.

Censor. You should?

Dabler. Yes: and, indeed, to own the truth, I have heard it whispered that it is a posthumous Work of—of—O, of Gay,—ay, of Gay.

Censor. Of Gay?

Dabler. Yes; found in a little corner of his private Bureau.

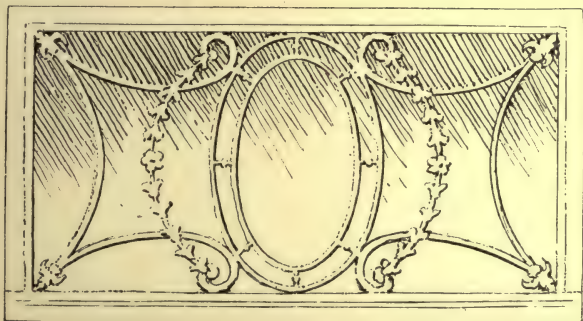
Censor. And pray, who has the impudence to make such an assertion?

Dabler. Who?—O, as to that, really I don't know who in particular,—but I assure you not *me*,—though, by the way, do you really think it very bad?

“The Witlings”

Censor. Despicable beyond abuse. Are you not of the same opinion?

Dabler. Me?—why really, as to that—I—I can't exactly say,—that is, I have hardly read it. (*Aside*) What a crabbed fellow! There is not an ounce of Taste in his whole composition. Curse me, if I was Nature, if I should not blush to have made him. Hold! my Tablets! a good thought that! I'll turn it into a Lampoon, and drop it at Stapletons'. (*Walks aside and writes in his Tablets.*)



CHAPTER XVI

HOSTILE FLEETS IN THE CHANNEL

THE summer of 1779 was a time of public alarm, for added to the disastrous war in America, both France and Spain had declared war against England, and in the month of August their united fleets suddenly made their appearance in the Channel.

"Had it not been for vile public news," writes Susan Burney, who was then staying at Chesington, "we should have spent this last week charmingly, but two days [ago] a report reached us from Kingston that the French and Spaniards were *landed*. Mr. Crisp went to Kingston the next morning, and came back with a countenance calculated to terrify and crush temerity itself. . . . Troops of French and Spaniards were landed at Falmouth, whilst the combined fleets were throwing bombs into Plymouth."

"Oh, Fanny," writes Mr. Crisp, "I fear I have lived too long! for I declare I had much rather be under ground than stay behind to see

Hostile Fleets in the Channel

the insolent Bourbon trampling under foot this once happy Island."

The alarm was, indeed, widespread, for Horace Walpole, writing to a friend on the night of August 18th, remarks :—

"All is true that you will see in the papers of the *Marlborough*, *Isis*, and *Southampton* being chased by the French and Spanish fleets of sixty, or sixty-three sail as [they] were going to join Sir Charles Hardy. To-day came another express that the united squadron was off Falmouth on Saturday. They are probably come to seek and fight our fleet, which, if not joined by those three ships, consists of but thirty-six—on whom depend our fate !

"I could give you details of unreadiness at home that would shock you ; miracles alone can counteract it. . . . Turn whither you will, whence is salvation to come to a nation so besotted ? . . . My opinion is that the enemies will strike in every place they can. . . .

"It is below a man [however] to rail when England totters to its foundations. Disgraced it is for ever ! In what piteous condition it may emerge I know not—if it does emerge ; if it does not, happy they who do not live to see its utter destruction."

In the *Gazetteer* of the same date (August 18th) a writer observes :—

The House in St. Martin's Street

"We are informed that an express is arrived with an account of the French and Spaniards being between the English fleet and the English coast; that they were preparing for an engagement, and most important news is expected in a few hours.

"It was also reported last night that the united fleets have blocked up Plymouth and taken the *Ramillies* of 74 guns, as she was going to join Sir Charles Hardy's fleet."

The writer goes on to point out the necessity of unity among our defenders. "At this most alarming moment," he says, "when the French and Spaniards ride with bold defiance on our coasts, and dispute our long-maintained empire of the sea . . . it is indeed time that every distinction of party should give way."

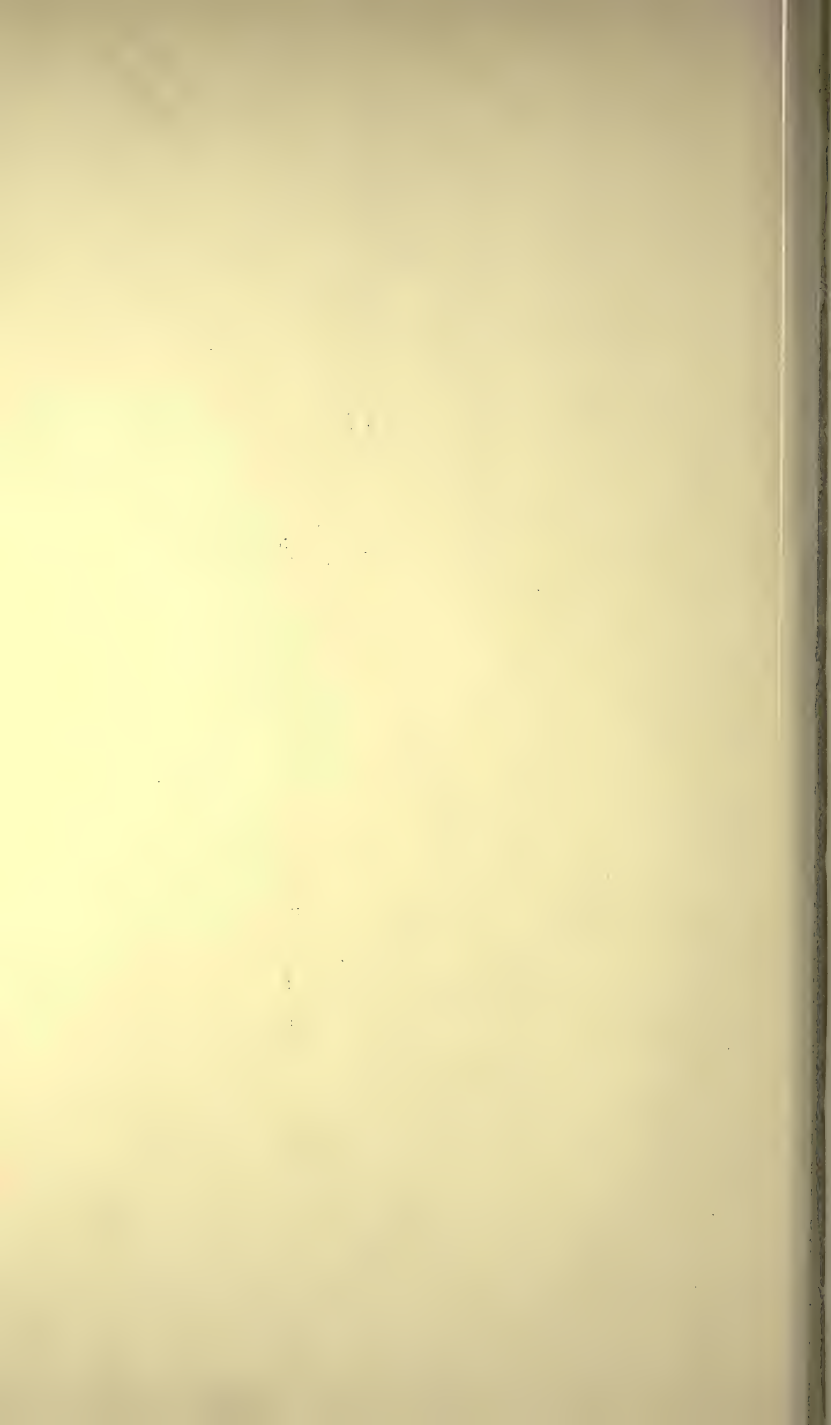
"Rouse us, Mr. Urban," urges a writer in the *Gentleman's Magazine*, "to bring back to their allegiance our revolted fellow-subjects [in America], and to repel the insolence of our natural enemies!"

In the same number of the *Gentleman's Magazine* a correspondent at Plymouth writes:—

"On the evenings of the 16th, 17th, and 18th the combined fleets made their appearance off Plymouth, but, to the astonishment of everybody, contented themselves with only looking at it. They were so near the land that the *Ardent*,



MOUNT EDGECUMBE FROM THE BLOCK-HOUSE.



Hostile Fleets in the Channel

man-of-war, coming from Portsmouth to join Sir Charles Hardy, took them for his fleet, and went so close before she discovered her mistake that she was attacked [and], it is generally believed, went to the bottom."

Horace Walpole mentions this same circumstance in a letter to a friend dated September 5th. "The *Ardent*," he writes, "mistaking enemies for friends, fell among them; but Captain Botelar was thrown so little off his guard that it took four ships to master him, and his own sunk as soon as he and his men were received on board the victor's. Monsieur D'Orvilliers,* admiring his gallantry, applauded it. He modestly replied, 'You will find every captain in our fleet behave in the same manner.'"

"Great preparations are making here," continues the writer from Plymouth, "for a vigorous defence. The youth of all ranks have entered into associations, and the Ordnance have sent in 3000 stand of arms. Orders have been issued that, in case of a bombardment, the pavement should be taken up and removed, that the bombs may sink into the earth without bursting."

It was feared by the officers commanding the troops that the woods of Mount Edgumbe might be used by the enemy as a place of concealment during an attack upon the dockyard; and there

* The Admiral of the French Fleet.

The House in St. Martin's Street

was a rumour afloat, it seems, that Lord Mount Edgumbe had demurred to having his trees felled when urged to do so. "It is an entire falsehood," says the writer, "that his lordship objected to their being cut down. . . . All that he said on the occasion was this : ' If it be absolutely necessary for the preservation of the dock-yard that Mount Edgumbe be destroyed, you have my ready consent, even to the last shrub . . . [but] if you are not quite certain, then for heaven's sake, let them stand.' The generals persevered in their opinion [of the danger], and the woods were immediately cut down, with the entire concurrence of the owner."

Mrs. Thrale, in an unpublished letter to Dr. Burney, written at this time, exclaims : " A fiery sky indeed ! which way can one bear to look at it ? The Opposition people use smoked glasses, but that only makes matters worse. . . . What makes Mrs. Burney ill ? Not low spirits, I hope ; if I did not pity every pain she felt I must be an ungrateful monkey. Tell her, however, she must not *go to bed* to cry for her country while Sir Charles Hardy keeps the seas. Mrs. Byron * *knows* he has orders to fight the combined Fleets *coûte que coûte*."

By this time public feeling was strongly aroused in all parts of the south of England. Horace

* Wife of Admiral Byron.

Hostile Fleets in the Channel

Walpole, writing from Twickenham, says : " Even this little quiet village is grown a camp. Servants are learning to fire all day long, and I suppose soon will demand their wages *le pistolet à la main*."

The combined fleets did not remain long within sight of the Devonshire coast. " But since their departure," writes a Plymouth correspondent of a London paper, " we are nearly as much subject to doubt and fluctuation in our intelligence of their operations as you are in London." Many were the rumours afloat concerning them. A paragraph in the *Morning Chronicle* informed its readers that " a French Squadron of eight frigates were cruising on the Coast of Ireland."

Horace Walpole writes early in September : " At last we have heard of Sir Charles Hardy off Plymouth, and yesterday at Portsmouth. Where the combined are I know not precisely ; but that such extended lines should not have caught the eye of each other is very surprising to us inexpert in winds and tides."

The news of their disappearance was hailed with joy at Chesington. Susan Burney writes : " Sunday we received intelligence from my Father . . . which produced a Revolution in our minds, for we found that the French had not attempted to land or attack any part of the Kingdom, and

The House in St. Martin's Street

that, though much was to be dreaded, there yet remained something to hope."

Happily, all cause for alarm was soon at an end. It appears that disagreements arose between the two commanders respecting the mode of attack, and that the haughty Spaniard precipitately withdrew from the scene of action—thus obliging the unfortunate Frenchman to withdraw also.

"D'Orvillier has left our channel," writes Mrs. Thrale, "after cutting a few ships out of Torbay and chasing Sir Charles to Spithead."

So ended all fear of invasion.



CHAPTER XVII

LIBERTY HALL

CHESINGTON Hall stands upon rising ground in a gently undulating plain that lies between Kingston and Epsom. The present house, although it was rebuilt a hundred years ago, in many respects resembles that occupied by Mr. Crisp, as it was reconstructed upon the original plan. In Crisp's time the old Hall, with its farm buildings and ancient dove-cote, was far from any edifice save and except the little old grey church, whose wooden belfry could be seen at the further end of an avenue of chestnuts. Communication, therefore, with the outer world was maintained with difficulty. Letters, for instance, had to wait to be posted till "baker's day," as Fanny calls it, arrived, when the baker carried them off to a distant post-town. Even to this day the Hall is a solitary habitation surrounded by sloping fields, and reached by a narrow country lane.

In its large old-fashioned garden fruit-trees,

The House in St. Martin's Street

vegetables, and flowers consort happily together, the beds being intersected by long paths of smooth-shaven grass, flanked by deep box hedges, while here and there glimpses of far-



THE ENTRANCE DOOR, CHESINGTON.

away hills and woods can be seen beneath the branches of its bordering elms.

To this beloved "Liberty Hall," as Fanny terms it, the Burney family came as to a second home.

"There is no place," she writes, "where I more really enjoy myself [than at Chesington.

Liberty Hall

All the household are kind, hospitable, and partial to me; there is no sort of restraint; everybody is disengaged and at liberty to pursue their own inclinations; and my Daddy Crisp, who is the soul of the place, is at once so flatteringly affectionate to me, and so infinitely, so beyond comparison, clever in himself, that were I to be otherwise than happy in his company, I must be either wholly without feeling or utterly destitute of understanding."

Fanny's affection for her Daddy Crisp comes out strikingly in a letter which was written in the spring of 1779, when Crisp was recovering from a sharp attack of illness. That letter now lies before us. The handwriting is unusually large and clear, Fanny, no doubt, having in her mind the darkened chamber of an invalid.

"STREATHAM,
"May 20th.

"MY DEAR DEAR DADDY,

"Your last sweet letter was the most acceptable I almost ever received in my life. Your extreme kindness to me nearly equalled the joy I had from hearing you were getting better. I do long to see you most eagerly, and will with my first power contrive it. Indeed, I have made everybody *here* long to see you too, but I would not for any bribery be as little likely to have *my* longing gratified as theirs is.

The House in St. Martin's Street

"Your exculpation of me was, like yourself, liberal and unsuspicious, and indeed, my dear Daddy, my heart was as unalterably and gratefully attached to you as it could be; and so it must ever remain; for, for many, many years you have been more dear to me than any other person out of my immediate family, in the whole world,—and this, though I believe I never was so gross before as to say it to *you*, is a notorious fact to all others. . . . I am half ashamed of this *undelicacy*, but your illness and kindness joined [together] put me off my guard. . . .

"Believe me ever and ever yours,

"F. B." *

Crisp happened to hear, on one occasion, that Fanny had been sounding his praises to a new friend.

"How could you have the face," he writes, "to say to Miss Greggory what you did about me? It is well for us both that I live out of the way and out of the knowledge of the world; otherwise how could I hope to escape the disgrace of being 'weighed in the balance and found wanting?'

". . . I am not only well content but delighted that your judgment should be warped in

* This letter is quoted in her Preface by the editor of the "Early Diaries" of Frances Burney.

Liberty Hall

my favour by your kindness : but if this Report of an Evelina should bring on a Scrutiny into the merits of the Cause, what must I do then?—Well!—love me on!—Continue in your blindness, and I will take my chance for the rest, and depend upon my *obscurity* for my *security*.”*

The affection, as we know, was mutual ; indeed, Crisp’s greatest happiness in life was in the intercourse he enjoyed with his “delectable Fanny,” as Mrs. Gast used to call her brother’s favourite.

On learning of a proposed visit from the Burney family, Crisp writes—

“I am glad to hear, the Burnean System inclines to a progressive motion towards Chesington. I hope the great Planet will not fail to be attended with the proper Satellites. . . . That bright tho’ little star, the Fannikin must (for want of a better place) be lodged next room to my lump of Earth during the night time ; but all day, her old Conjuring place, the little Closet at the end of the Gallery, is destined to be kept sacred for her use.

“Here let me put a short querie—Suppose Hetty (with Charles sometimes) should make us a visit, could the Fannikin, for the sake of one she loves so dearly, submit to ascend somewhat nearer to her own native skies, to make room for

* Burney MSS.

The House in St. Martin's Street

her? . . . Send me a line when you all come, and the sooner the better." *

In the summer of 1779, Susan and Hetty were staying at Chesington. Susan writes to her sister Fanny: "Monday night after supper we were all made very merry by Mr. Crisp suffering his wig to be turned the hind part before, and my cap put over it, Hetty's cloak, and Mrs. Gast's apron and ruffles. In this ridiculous trim he danced a minuet with Hetty, personifying *Madame Duval*, while she acted *Mr. Smith* at the Long Room, Hampstead!"

Fanny has described her Daddy Crisp's laugh in one of her Diaries. "It first," she says, "puts every feature in comical motion, and then fairly shakes his whole frame, so that there are tokens of thorough enjoyment from head to foot."

Sometimes the evenings at Chesington were enlivened by music. Mr. Crisp, we are told by Dr. Burney, "had exquisite taste in all the fine arts," and was especially devoted to music. It was for him that the first harpsichord with hammers (the earliest kind of pianoforte) was brought over from Italy. He was a keen critic, too, as Susan was well aware when she remarked:—

"I don't enjoy *mes aises* much in playing to Mr. Crisp. He is very fond of *Tornate* [Sirene], and has made me chaunt it three times to him,

* Burney MSS.



G. Dance

SAMUEL CRISP



Liberty Hall

and as I don't hate the song myself . . . I am not very sorry he takes to it. He is fond of my father's third Duet of the second set, too, which we play like anything!" Here Susan breaks off her account to observe, "There is so much wind it has just blown down my inkstand over my paper. 'Pray, Milady, excuse.'"

The original manuscript of this same letter lies by our side, and there, across the centre of the page on which Susan wrote these last words, is the great black stream of ink, as if it had been spilt but yesterday!

Fanny had inspired her friends the Thrales, as we have seen, with a strong desire to make the acquaintance of her Daddy Crisp. In a letter to him, dated from Bath, she says: "While I have been writing, Mr. Thrale called to know what I was about, and upon my answering 'writing to my Daddy Crisp,' he said, 'Pray give my compliments to him, and tell him, if you will, that when I return to Streatham, if he likes it, I will come and see him.'

"O, my dear Daddy, how sweet a frolic for *me*! Pray do like it, that so I may contrive to get at you, and pray make Mrs. Gast stay, and pray charge Kitty not to look formal. . . . This notion and motion has given me so much pleasure that it has driven from me all other subjects." *

* Burney MSS.

The House in St. Martin's Street

When a visit from Mr. and Mrs. Thrale to Chesington had been finally arranged, Susan writes to her sister: "Mr. Crisp has so high an opinion of Mrs. Thrale that he thinks of her coming without *shuddering*!—and that I believe to be more than one could say of any other lady whom, like Mrs. Thrale, he has never yet seen."

The visit proved successful in every way, and Crisp noticed with pleasure "the courteous readiness and unassuming good-humour with which Mrs. Thrale received the inartificial civilities of Kitty Cooke, and the old-fashioned, but cordial, hospitality of Mrs. Hamilton." This, from "a celebrated wit, moving in the sphere of high life," he had not expected; neither had *she* looked for "the elegance in language and manners" she found in the Chesington recluse.

On her return home Mrs. Thrale wrote to Fanny, who had remained behind her at Chesington: "And so I pleased Mr. Crisp, did I? and yet he never heard, it seems, the only good things I said, which were very earnest, and very honest, and very pressing invitations to him to see Streatham nearer than through the telescope. Now, that he did *not* hear all this was your fault, Mademoiselle; for you told me that Mr. Crisp was old, and Mr. Crisp was infirm; and if I had found those things so, I should have spoken louder, and concluded him to be deaf; but finding

Liberty Hall

him very amiable, and very elegant, and very polite to *me*, and very unlike an old man, I never thought about his being deaf ; and perhaps was a little coquettish, too, in my manner of making the invitation. I now repeat it, however, and give it under my hand, that I should consider such a visit as a very, very great honour, and so would Mr. Thrale."

The return visit was duly paid, Fanny accompanying her Daddy Crisp to Streatham. A warm welcome awaited them, both from the Thrales and from the great Dr. Johnson himself, who had come down from town purposely to meet the "hermit of Chesington."

After Crisp's departure, Dr. Johnson observed to Mr. Thrale, "Sir, it is a very singular thing to see a man with all his powers so much alive, when he has so long shut himself up from the world. Such readiness of conception, quickness of recollection, facility of following discourse started by others, in a man who has so long had only the past to feed upon, are rarely to be met with."

Crisp remarks to Fanny in an unpublished portion of a letter, dated December 8th : "The next article that gave me some content was to understand that my visit to Streatham was well taken, and that I came off as you say I did, after appearing before such a Tribunal. I think I was

The House in St. Martin's Street

in high luck. I attribute it, however, in great part to my having a powerful advocate to stand my Friend ; but the principal cause of my escaping so well, I am persuaded, was the bribe I brought in my hand. You remember the letter you and I wrote to put off your return to Streatham for a few days, and Mrs. Thrale's answer. When she wrote that answer, it is evident, notwithstanding a veil of great politeness, that she was out of humour. But !—at the sight of her dear playfellow returned !—and safely hous'd under her own roof !—then the features were all lighted up ! then the eyes sparkled, the smiles and the dimples began to play, and in a moment she was all sunshine ! ”



CHAPTER XVIII

A WOMAN OF WIT

DR. JOHNSON remarked to Mrs. Thrale one day, "You have as much sense, and more wit, than any woman I know; and yet," he added, "I have known all the wits from Mrs. Montagu down to Bet Flint!" And Sir William Pepys, speaking in later years of Mrs. Thrale, said he had "never met with any human being who possessed the talent of conversation to such a degree." *

Fortunately for us, we are able to form some idea of what that conversation was from Mrs. Thrale's letters. Her style is so natural, so spontaneous, so free from all pedantry or affectation, that we seem to *hear* rather than to *read* the words before us.

Mrs. Thrale's special vein of humour comes out vividly in a series of unpublished letters which has been placed in our hands.

Here is one written to Dr. Burney about a

* See "A Later Pepys," edited by Alice C. C. Gaussen.

The House in St. Martin's Street

sedan-chair accident. It is dated "Fryday 5, March 1777."

"MY DEAR SIR,

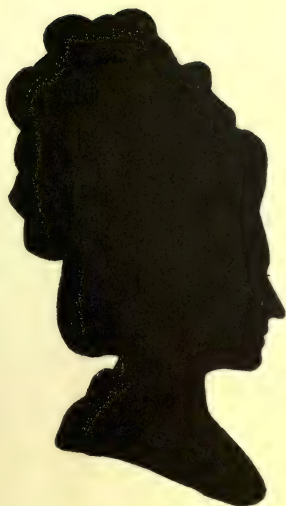
"Lest you should hear of this hateful Accident by other means I think it right to tell you my own story. The truth is my Chairmen were drunk, and though I got safe out of the Opera House with them, they flung me flat down on one side, just as we got into Great George Street, broke the Chair and all the glasses to pieces, but I was neither cut, nor hurt, nor frightened *out of my wits*. . . . You know I always send Sam with Queeny from all publick places, and fortunately as I was crawling out of my shell they passed by, and taking hold of Sam, I got home perfectly safe after my adventure. . . .

"Say nothing of it to Johnson if you see him unless he speaks first. . . . On Fryday, that is to-day sennight, I shall expect you home. . . . after that day you are under the care of your most faithful & obedient

"H. L. T.

"Thank Heaven you had more wit than to go to the Opera!"

Again she writes to Dr. Burney on the 6th November of the same year (she was then staying at Brighthelmstone).



Mrs. Thrale.
Given by herself to Dr. B.



A Woman of Wit

“DEAR SIR,

“What news shall I tell you of a place that will, as General Burgoyne says—*Physically* speaking, be soon as much *evacuated* as Philadelphia! We have had Dukes and Dutchesses but nobody has made us amends for Doctor Burney. . . .

“No sooner were you gone but the people brought me in a fine Forte Piano, and a *gentleman* to tune it, always some Diavolino—when one has Teeth there’s no Meat and when one has Meat there’s no Teeth, &c.

“*A propos* to nothing at all (but the Meat and the Teeth) as soon as I had sealed my last letter to you I ran down to dinner, where being diligent to help your friend Lady Poole, I hastily swallowed the bone of a boiled chicken, which would infallibly have finished me, had not they sent suddenly for a surgeon who forced it down with the whale-bone and sponge and so, as Macbeth says, I

“‘displaced the mirth
Broke the good meeting—with most admired Disorder.’*
•

“The Balls are over and Rooms expire to-night, but Mr. Thrale does not mean to stir till Monday or Tuesday sevensnight. We have a *lame* Lord left, a *deaf* Gentleman, and Mr. Palmer who *squints*. My Master therefore *compels* them to

* A favourite quotation of Mrs. Thrale’s.

The House in St. Martin's Street

come in and we play our cards in the best Parlour.

“You will see Mr. Johnson before I do, he is in Fleet Street now, at least I believe so, and direct to him accordingly by this Post. I wish you would bring him to Streatham yourself on Wednesday or Thursday sennight, whichever is most convenient to you, it would save my horses a prance the day after their journey, and would give me a view of the people I most wish to see—after my own family.

“Mr. Thrale has made me *burn my wig* and wear my own hair, so I shall exhibit myself now in a new character; . . . but I rather regret my old peruke than rejoice in its loss, though I do gain seven years by it in youthful looks.

“Mr. Murphy is more fortunate than we were: he has won the fine Morrocco Addissons in a Raffle at Thomases Shop from the Dutchess of Devonshire who had three chances against him besides 20 people more.

“ . . . Mr. Thrale accepts your *good* words and says I may send you more in return, the *rough* ones have been liberally bestowed on Mr. Murphy—but my Master has a real regard for both of you, only somewhat an odd way of showing it.

“Let me—(tho' in this commerce you would rather receive than give I believe) Let me have

A Woman of Wit

one letter more before I listen once again to Pastoral and Rondo, and before I make you listen to the nonsense of

“Your most faithful

“humble Servant,

“HESTER L. THRALE.

“Best words and best wishes to all the Burneian System from Newton House to Otaheite.”

This last word refers to James Burney, who was then at Otaheite serving under Captain Cook. Mrs. Thrale took a lively interest in his career, although she had as yet never seen him.

Upon hearing the news of his being appointed to the command of his first ship, she writes to Dr. Burney : *—

“Why this *is* delightful, dear Sir! Ay and ten times delightful; and who says there is no happiness for honest men and affectionate hearts in this world? God give you many years of joy of your son’s virtue and good fortune—there is no joy like it, though I will have a little myself in seeing and *feeling* yours.

“On Fryday will I pick you up as early as I can, but in short to dine here and stay here—I

* Burney MSS.

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do not know how long. You will now be so good-humoured you will be able to deny me nothing—Ah, dear Sir, you were never skilled in Mr. Smith's method of *venturing to put a negative &c.*, so do not put a negative on the true affection with which

“I am Yours,

“H. L. T.”

Dr. Johnson was as much interested in the fortunes of James Burney as was Mrs. Thrale. When James was appointed to the command of the *Bristol*, in 1781, Dr. Johnson wrote to her—

“I delight to think of the happiness diffused among the Burneys. I question if any ship upon the ocean goes out attended with more good wishes than that which carries the fate of Burney. I love all that breed whom I can be said to know; and one or two whom I hardly know, I love upon credit, and love them because they love each other.”

Mrs. Thrale writes to Fanny*—

“Dear Creature! what a pretty little snug family talk we had that night before parting: had not we? You was so kind and so communicative—and I do love you!

“Well, Sir Philip† was sadly disappointed

* Burney MSS.

† Sir Philip Jennings Clarke.

A Woman of Wit

not to meet Miss Burney. . . . He will drink but two dishes of tea now she don't fill it out—'Sir Philip again!' cries out the dear Doctor, 'I shall cut that Sir Philip's throat at last'—no need, no need, the throat is too hoarse already. . . . Jerry Crutchley missed the merriment at his chamber door—Perkins protests you are a lady of solid judgement and an *old Doctor* almost *superannuated* who dined here o' Sunday said how he read *Evelina* with delight.

" . . . My service to Dick's monkey, has it a long tail? and from what country did it come? and, as Fanny Brown's father said—what language can it speak? *chattering* perhaps; I suppose—

" 'The gay chat, more than *Reason* that charms &c.' "

In one of her letters Mrs. Thrale alludes to "Johnson and his Blackamoor, and his *solid* notions of Love-making." She goes on to say—

"I have asked the S.S.* and Pepys for Monday next to meet Jenkinson—the *solids* might put me in mind of them too—and I hope they'll have a pleasant drive home by moonlight. . . .

"Adieu my beloved Tyo and keep a corner of your heart warm for

"Your H. L. T.

" 'We'll all keep a corner the Lady cried out,
We'll all keep a corner was echoed about.' "

* Miss Sophie Streatfield.

The House in St. Martin's Street

On another occasion Mrs. Thrale writes :—

“ Well, and what have I to say to my sweetest Burney ? I could not wish her good morrow nor good night through the crack of the Red Room door lest I should be frightened and think I had found a crack in my own scull—as well as in so many of my neighbours. I could not tell her what passed at our Catorian dinner, for nothing did pass but hob and nob as I remember. Mrs. Cator worked at the *Win de Graw* and went to sleep like a sensible woman, while the Tit sung to her. . . . *You* would have laughed at that, but all superiority strikes *me* as respectable, tho’ I did long to say with your friend Kitty—‘ Well ! Stupifaction ! ’ ”

In a letter to Dr. Burney, written when Fanny was at Streatham, she says :—

“ Your dear Fanny is perfectly well and in company *now* with half a score of people who all *admire* her, but nobody except the inhabitants of Newton House can *love* her better than does your

“ H. L. T.”

Mrs. Thrale had a ready pen for verse, and was especially happy in her translations. Here is an instance *à propos* of her first sight of a balloon—

A Woman of Wit

"I saw one of the first," she writes—"the very first, Mongolfier, I believe—go up from the Luxembourg Gardens at Paris; and in about an hour after, expressing my anxiety whither Pilâtre de Rosier and his friend Charles were gone (meaning of course to what part of France they would be carried), a grave man made reply, 'Je crois, Madame, qu'ils sont allés, ces Messieurs-là, pour voir le lieu où les vents se forment.'

"What fellows Frenchmen are! and always have been!

"Abate Parini made a pretty impromptu on [the balloon] . . . and I translated it. Here it is:—

"THE MACHINE SPEAKS.

"In empty space behold me hurl'd
The sport and wonder of the world :
Who eager gaze, whilst I aspire
Expanded with aërial fire.

"And since man's selfish race demands
More empire than the seas and lands ;
For him my courage mounts the skies
Invoking nature as I rise.

"Mother of all ! if thus refin'd
My flight can benefit mankind,
Let them by me new realms prepare
And take possession of the air."

* * * *

We would mention, in passing, that this pioneer balloon of Mongolfiers is commemorated

The House in St. Martin's Street
in another poem of the day—"The Botanic
Garden"—by Dr. Darwin. He writes :—

"So on the shoreless air the intrepid Gaul
Launched the vast concave of his buoyant ball;
Journeying on high the silken castle glides
Bright as a meteor through the azure tides."

In Mrs. Thrale's letters it is the humorous side of her character that chiefly transpires; but the more tender side comes out in the following delicate and sympathetic translation of some verses by the Abbé Larignan; the closing line of each stanza being "*Bon soir la compagnie.*" The verses in the original, together with their translation, are contained in an unpublished letter to Dr. Burney, bearing the date of August 30th, 1779. In later years they appeared in print.

I

"Arrived at grave and grey Fourscore
'Tis time to think on Life no more,
Time to be gone, and therefore I
Can quit the world without a sigh,
Without or sorrow, care, or fright
Can wish the company, Good night.

2

"When hence we part 'tis hard to say
Whither we rove or which the way :
But He who sent me here will show
My doubtful footsteps where to go.
So trusting to His truth and might,
I bid the company—Good night."

CHAPTER XIX

A MEMORABLE GATHERING IN THE OPERA HOUSE

THE editor of the "Early Diaries of Frances Burney" remarks that during Fanny's frequent absences from her family, when visiting Mrs. Thrale, "Susan sent to her at Streatham, or Brighton, or Bath, delightful (as yet unpublished) chronicles of all that went on at home. Her journals," she adds, "abound in traits of the time and its noted people."

These unpublished journals are now in our hands. They form a thick packet of large, square, yellowish paper; upon which the handwriting is firm and clear, and the ink still black. As we turn over their pages and dwell on the vivid scenes described by the writer, it seems almost as if the doors of the house in St. Martin's Street had opened for us, and that we were taking our place in the family circle. We hear the chat of the Burneys round their breakfast-table in the downstairs parlour; we catch the strains of music

The House in St. Martin's Street

when guests are assembling, during the long winter evenings, in the upper parlours; or we accompany Susan and her sisters in their visits abroad to friends and acquaintance; or follow them to the Opera House or Pantheon to hear the performance of some favourite singer. But wherever it may be, we feel the happy influence of a family "at unity in itself," and where "all abounded in talents and all were cultivated and intelligent."

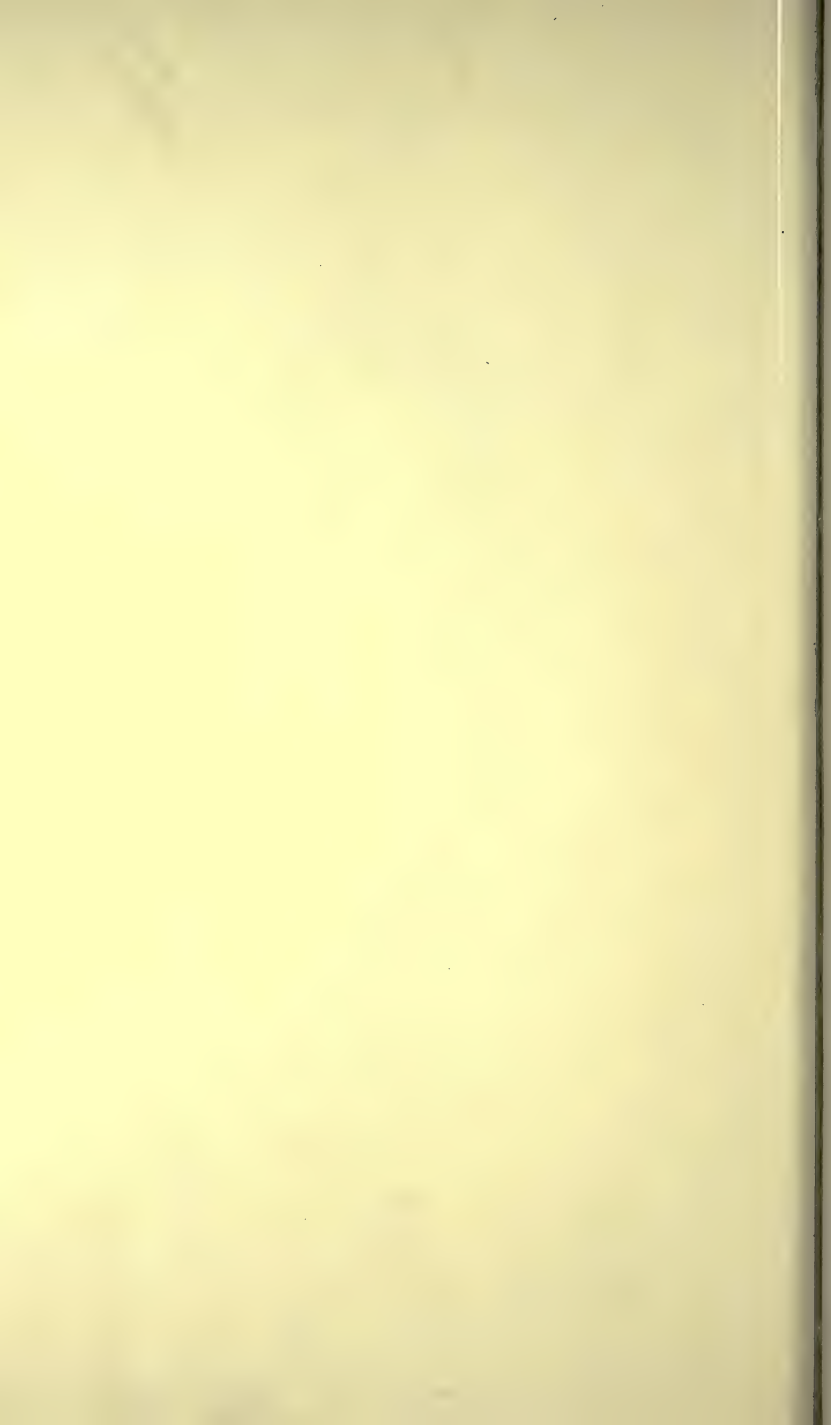
Susan, who had had the advantage of spending about three years at a school in Paris, was an excellent French scholar. She also knew some Italian. These acquirements were of much service in her father's house, as it was frequented by many foreign musicians, whose acquaintance Dr. Burney had made when travelling on the Continent, and who were in general little acquainted with our language.

The reader will probably notice that, in the course of these pages, the foreigners appear sometimes to speak in broken English and sometimes in perfectly good English. In the latter case we would point out it is Susan's *translation* of their remarks that we are reading.

Most of these journals were written in the course of the year 1780. At that time the great Italian singer, Gasparo Pacchierotti, was in England; and the Burneys had had the pleasure



SUSANNA ELIZABETH BURNEY



A Memorable Gathering

of forming his acquaintance. The acquaintance had commenced by Dr. Burney's presenting him with a copy of the first volume of his "History of Music" (recently published) as an incentive to read English; and now both Fanny and Susan were doing all in their power to teach him to converse in English. One day he remarked to Fanny, "Miss Borni give me very much encouragement; but is very troublesome the difficulties."

Writing in her Journal on the 9th March, Susan describes a great gathering in the Opera House (or large theatre in the Haymarket) to hear Pacchierotti sing in Sacchini's opera of *Rinaldo*. "We arrived," she says, "just as the overture began. Our Box was next to the Duke of Dorset's. . . . Lady Hales was on the stage of our side, Mrs. Castle and the Ogles in an upper Stage Box, Lady Clarges and Miss Clarges in the former's own Box; Lady Edgecumbe in the Pitt, Miss Bull, Miss Streatfield, Mr. and Mrs. Locke, the Duchess of Devonshire in her Box, Mrs. Crewe likewise. . . . Rauzzini sat close to the Orchestra, then Mr. Brudenell, and Mr. Harris, behind them my Father, Mr. Mason, Sir Joshua Reynolds, Miss Palmers, Miss Basil, Mrs. Hayes, Lord Ailsbury in his Box with Lord Ashburnham, . . . Marchetti with her husband; Tenducci, and Mota in the front Boxes, in the 1st Gallery Mrs. and Miss Kirwans with Mr.

The House in St. Martin's Street

and Mrs. Paradise—in short we had the satisfaction of seeing faces we knew everywhere—and indeed a most brilliant House.

“The Opera went off extremely well. . . . Pozzi did not sing so well as usual—but Pacchierotti—oh, Pacchierotti—how divine he was!



THE OLD OPERA HOUSE, HAYMARKET.

“In the ‘*Superbe di me stesso*,’ which was ever a great favourite of mine, he . . . executed the divisions with that freedom and that grace which is peculiar to himself, and expressed the pathetic passages as he, and he alone, can express them. . . . In his great Scene ‘*Misero! che veggo*,’ between the Drama, the composition and his performance I was—absolutely *melted*—and cried

A Memorable Gathering

as I did at the first serious opera I heard, when Guadagni performed Orfeo. I never heard anything more touching, nor shall ever recollect it without emotion. . . .

"It was felt by the Audience wonderfully. . . . No—not wonderfully, since it was felt only as it ought to be. Such a murmur spread, especially from that corner of the Pitt where my Father sat, of whispered bravos as I scarce ever heard—and the moment, nay even *before* the song was quite done, there was a burst of vehement applause."

Susan's delight in music is evinced throughout her journals, as is also her tenderness of heart. This tenderness was, at all times, a marked feature of her character. We read in some family papers that "when she was a little girl at the tragedy of *Jane Shore*, seeing Jane Shore pacing about and saying that for three days she had eaten nothing, 'Then, Ma'am,' said the little girl, 'will you please to accept of my orange?' handing it out of the Stage box." *

After Susan had been present at a second performance of *Rinaldo*, she writes: "Every line of the Opera is beautifully set by Sacchini, and Pacchierotti, not only in his airs, but in every word of the Recitative, delighted me. So much

* This incident is alluded to by Hannah More in her "Memoirs."

The House in St. Martin's Street

sense, so much *sensibility*, such judicious, such affecting expression does he give to everything!"

Dr. Burney has written of this great singer : "There is, in his countenance, a constant play of features which manifests the sudden workings and agitations of his soul. He is an enthusiast in his art, and feels the merit of a composition . . . with true Italian energy."

It happened that, on the day of this last-mentioned visit to the Opera House, Susan had been unwell, "but the music is so fine," she writes, "that though I was in pain, from my head to my foot, before it began, I felt no complaint during the whole piece. I was in Elysium, and will insist upon it, that there are medicinal powers in music."

Writing again in the month of March, Susan speaks of her having been present at the performance of a grand concert at the Pantheon, whither she had gone in company with her father and also of Fanny, for the latter was then at home.

The Pantheon was used as a theatre, and also as a public promenade. "Imagination," says a pompous contemporary writer, "cannot well exceed the elegance and grandeur of the apartments, the boldness of the paintings, or the effect produced by the dispositions of the lights, reflected from gilt vases."

A Memorable Gathering

The concert seems to have been followed by an opera, between the first and second acts of which the audience adjourned for refreshments. Dr. Burney invited Pacchierotti to take tea with his family. "Accordingly," writes Susan, "in going to the Tea Room, he joined us. . . . 'Dr. Burney he tell me you desire my company at the Tea?' said he, looking extremely pleased. 'Yes, indeed,' said Fanny and I together, 'if you can come.' 'Oh, Ma'am, I am very happy.' Accordingly we went to the regions below together—and Fanny and I repeatedly told him how delighted we had been at his benefit, with his singing, and [with] the reception he had met with.

"'Indeed,' said he, 'the pleasure was very great and *affected* me indeed very much!'"

Among the performers at the concert were Fischer, the celebrated hautbois player, and Cramer, the well-known composer and accomplished player on the harpsichord.

"I said it pained me," remarks Susan, "to hear Fischer and Cramer play so divinely with so little attention or applause. . . ."

"'Very true,' said he, 'and Fischer, above all, for he is *always new*.'

"'Tis a bad place for music,' said I.

"'I beg pardon, ma'am . . . it is a very good place if there was any attention . . .

The House in St. Martin's Street

but no place is good for music if there is not silence.' ”

Fanny has introduced a visit to the Pantheon in her novel of *Evelina*. “There was an exceeding good concert,” remarks the heroine, “but too much talking to hear it well. Indeed, I was quite astonished to find how little music is attended to in silence ; for, though everybody seems to admire, hardly anybody listens.”

This habit of talking prevailed to a still greater extent at the theatre. Mr. Lovel, the fop in *Evelina*, observes to Captain Mirvan : “For my part I confess I seldom listen to the players. One has so much to do in looking about and finding out one's acquaintance, that, really, one has no time to mind the stage. . . . One merely comes to meet one's friends, and show that one's alive.”

On the 26th March there was a large gathering of friends in St. Martin's Street to bid farewell to Fanny on her departure, with the Thrals, for Bath. Mrs. Thrale had come to take her away that same night, and she was accompanied by many of the Streatham set ; among them the beautiful Miss Sophie Streatfield (the S.S., as Mrs. Thrale always calls her), who possessed the remarkable faculty of “shedding tears at will.” Writing on the following day to Fanny, who was already on her journey westwards, Susan

A Memorable Gathering

remarks : " Well ! when the carriage was driven off, I ran upstairs and bustled into the room with Dr. Gillies and Charlotte—a little flustered, but found the fair S.S. with the tears yet glistening in her eyes. . . . But Pacchierotti—don't tell anybody tho'—Pacchierotti's eyes were just in Miss Streatfield's state, partly owing to his own concern at your departure, partly to his soft sympathetic disposition, which was moved by the sight the S.S. presented to his view. . . . Pacchierotti would insist upon it that I cried too—I assured him, with great truth, I never did those things in public. He said, ' Mrs. Thrale's friend, she was so affected—she *wept* ! ' He talked on, but I did not immediately hear him. ' You are very absent, ' said he. ' It seem to me that you are particularly attached to Miss Fanny, and she to you—more than the rest—there seem *but one soul, but one mind between you*. You are two in one. ' "

CHAPTER XX

THE SPLENDID AND CLASSIC BATH

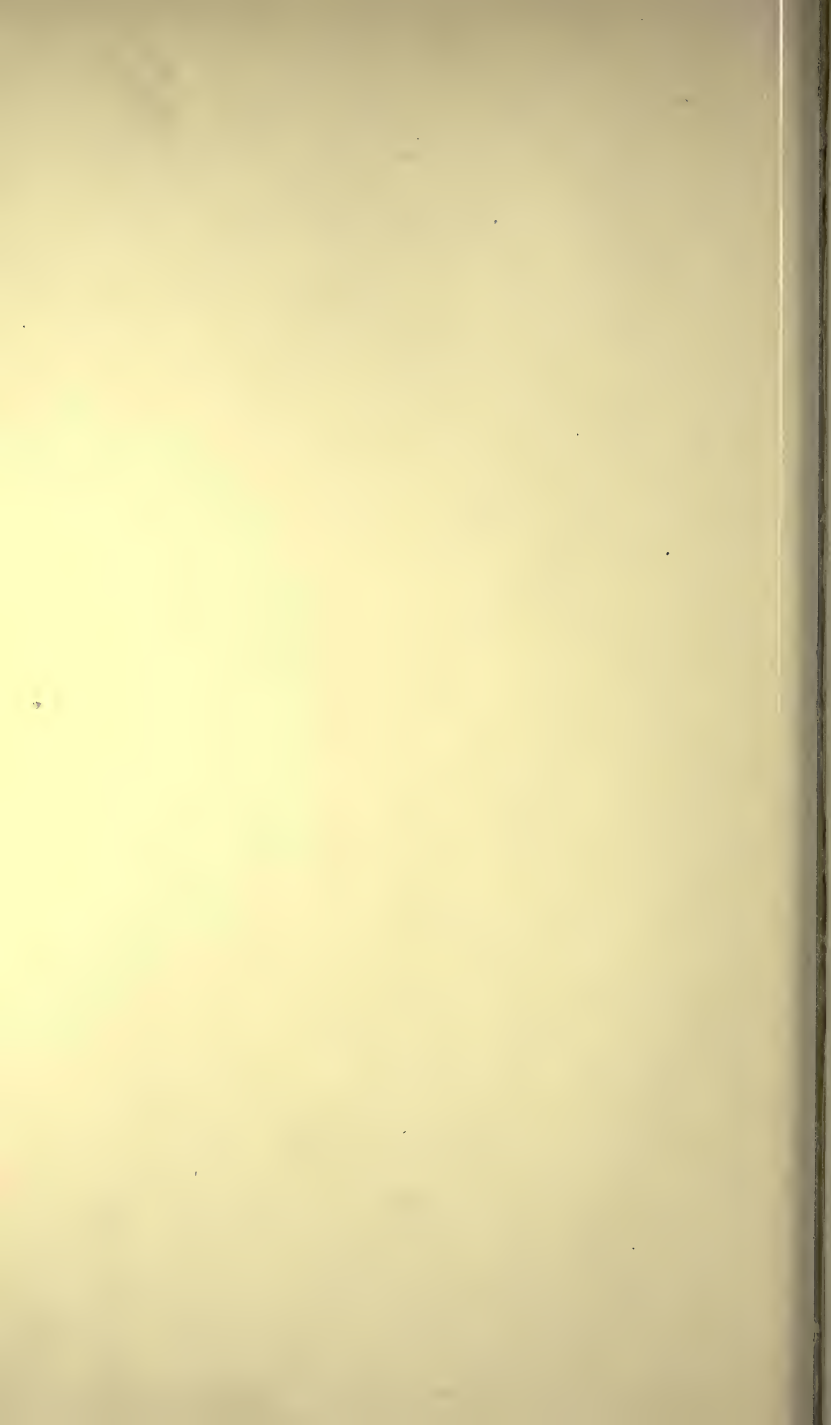
LET us follow Fanny in her journey to Bath, commenced on March 30th, and establish her there before returning to Susan and St. Martin's Street.

Fanny has described the Thrales' mode of travelling. "They rode," she tells us, "in a coach and four," and were "followed by a post-chaise bearing two maids," and also by "two men on horseback." We can therefore fancy the small cavalcade passing along the "great western road" on those early spring days, the travellers catching glimpses on their way of sunlit river and hillside, of primrose-bordered lanes, of busy farmsteads and of thriving country towns.

There had been a royal hunt, it seems, in the neighbourhood of Windsor on the day preceding their journey. "We only went to Maidenhead Bridge the first night," writes Fanny. "Several stragglers [were] yet remaining at all the inns, and we heard of nothing but the King and royal huntsmen and huntswomen.



THE "BEAR INN," DEVIZES.



The Splendid and Classic Bath

“The second day we slept at Speen Hill, and the third we reached Devizes.”

Here the travellers halted at the “Bear Inn,” an old gabled house still to be seen standing in the market-place. Its main entrance now opens to the front, but in former times it was at the side of the inn by the great coaching-yard. Three massive pillars, with decorated capitals, give dignity to the old entrance, and make this part of the building especially quaint and picturesque.

Fanny and Mrs. Thrale were no sooner settled in their apartments, than they were surprised by hearing the sounds of music proceeding from a parlour near to their own. On inquiry they found that the musicians were daughters of their host and hostess—Mr. and Mrs. Lawrence. “But the wonder of the family,” says Fanny, “was yet to be produced. This was their brother, a lovely boy of ten years of age, who seems to be not merely the wonder of their family, but of the times, for his astonishing skill in drawing. They protest he has never had any instruction, yet showed us some of his productions that were really beautiful. . . . I was equally struck with the boy and his works.

“We found that he had been taken to town and that all the painters had been very kind to him, and Sir Joshua Reynolds had pronounced

The House in St. Martin's Street

him (the mother said) the most promising genius he had ever met with."

No wonder the parents were proud of their little son, who in after years became the well-known painter, Sir Thomas Lawrence. Thomas, it seems, possessed great powers of acting as well as of drawing. There is a summer-house in the garden of the Inn, where Garrick, it is said (when halting at the "Bear"), loved to retire with the child, and where he would listen, by the hour, to his dramatic recitations.

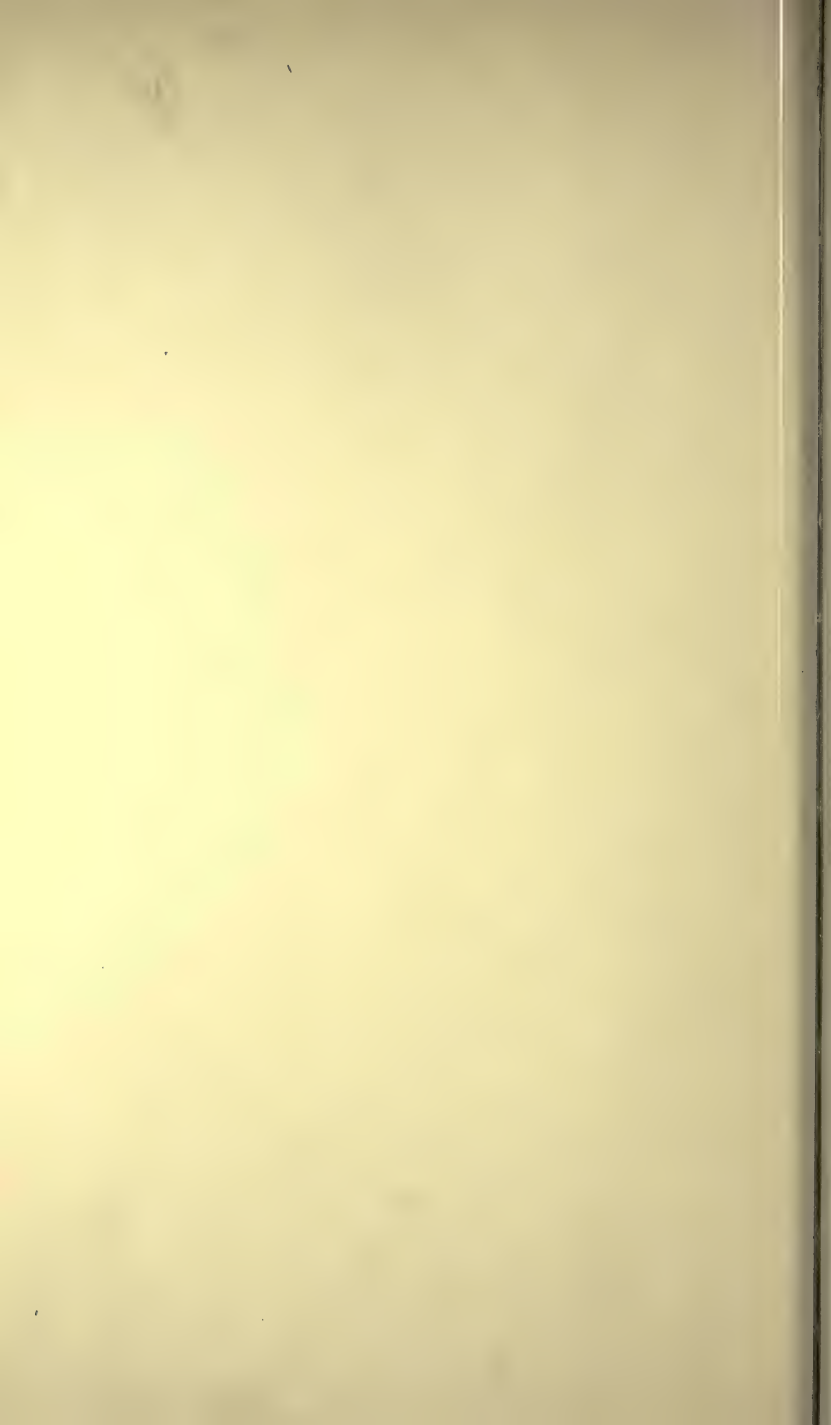
A pencil-sketch of Lawrence's father (taken by the son) hangs on the wall of the Inn staircase, in which the host of the "Bear" is represented as a portly, dignified individual seated in an arm-chair. He wears a powdered wig, and his coat is thrown open, displaying a broad waistcoat. There is also a sketch of Mrs. Lawrence—a handsome woman wearing a frilled cap tied under the chin.

After resting one night at Devizes, the travellers proceeded on their journey, and, in due course, reached that "liveliest city of the land," as a contemporary writer has termed it, "the splendid and classic Bath."

"We alighted," writes Fanny, "at the York House, and Mrs. Thrale sent immediately to Sir Philip Jennings Clarke, who spent the Easter holidays here. He came instantly, and told us



THE CORNER HOUSE, SOUTH PARADE.



The Splendid and Classic Bath

of lodgings in the South Parade, whither in the afternoon we all hied, and Mr. Thrale immediately hired a house at the left corner. It [is] most deliciously situated; we have meadows, hills, Prior Park, 'the soft flowing Avon,'—whatever Nature has to offer, I think, always in our view. My room commands all these; and more luxury for the eye I cannot form a notion of."

The view from the "house at the left corner," or extreme end, of the South Parade, is, to this day, just as Fanny has described it. The front of the building faces the Parade, but its eastern side overlooks the Avon from the summit of a steep, wooded bank. In former days a flight of steps, called Whitehall Stairs, led down from the end of the Parade to the water's edge, where there was a ferry-boat, called "Tomkins' ferry-boat," to take passengers across the river.

Soon after their arrival in Bath, Mrs. Thrale writes in an unpublished letter* to Dr. Burney—

"How I do reproach myself for saying, though only *to* myself, that I had no time to write to my dear Dr. Burney! Yet I do protest between dressing and marketing and bathing and fooling, I have not a moment of my own, any more than you have who are really busy. Let me, however, thank you for your Fanny and mine. She is an unspeakable comfort and

* Burney MSS.

The House in St. Martin's Street

delight to me, so affectionate, so friendly, so good to my master. I knew I was right to make you lend her to me; she is worth all my entreaties.

"Mr. Thrale feels the benefit of Bath already, that is, he feels the benefit of being a hundred miles from the Compting House and the House of Commons.

". . . Mr. Texier's Feste does not make more noise in London than Mrs. Macartney's suppers do here; and till our election is over for a Master of the Ceremonies, I defy your town to exceed ours in heat of party or acrimony of abuse, let Lord North and Lord Shelburne do their worst."

Fanny alludes to this election in an unpublished portion of her Diary. After mentioning the arrival of some morning callers on a certain Saturday, she says, "We all went in a body to the Lower Rooms, where a Master of the Ceremonies was electing. We found them violently crowded, and parties running very high for the various candidates. Mr. Tyson was elected."

There is a portrait of Mr. Tyson in a Bath Guide of the year 1782. He wears a richly embroidered coat with lace ruffles; his hair is powdered, and he smiles blandly from out his frame of carved flowers and ribbons.

The Old or Lower Rooms, which stood near the North Parade, are those over which Beau

The Splendid and Classic Bath

Nash reigned supreme for so many years. Mrs. Thrale's earliest recollections went back as far as those days. She remembered, she tells us, when a child, "being carried about the rooms by Beau Nash, and being taken notice of by Lady Caroline, mother of the famous Charles James Fox."

Curiously enough, Mrs. Thrale (as Madame Piozzi) lived to see the last of the Old Rooms. In the year 1820 she gave a great gala in them to celebrate her eightieth birthday, at which more than seven hundred people were present, when the aged lady herself danced a stately minuet. A few months later these historic rooms were burnt to the ground.

In the month of May, 1780, Mrs. Thrale, writing to Dr. Burney, remarks *—

"I suppose you think you have all the music to yourselves, no such thing; here is Jerningham the poet, and he sings songs to a harp—and now he will have the carpet removed, and then he will have the fire put out, and then he must wet his lips with some catlap, and then he must have two candles placed by him to show off his figure—and when all's done he sings Arne's ballads in a voice so low, so tender and so delicate, that, though the room we sat in was not 20 feet long, Miss Burney was forced to move her seat that she might hear the dear creature at all."

* Burney MSS.

The House in St. Martin's Street

The witty Lord Mulgrave, who was in Bath at this time, used to call Jerningham "a pink and white poet," for it seems that his coat was of the same pink colour as his cheeks. "He is," says Fanny, "all daintification in manner, speech, and dress, and, while he sings, looks the gentlest of all dying Corydons!"

"The [professional] players here are admirable," writes Mrs. Thrale, "if they would not sing so. I ran out of the Theatre last night so precipitately when the people encored a song, our Evelina has been laughing ever since at the thoughts on't.

". . . Well! I do think Bath as Bath the loveliest place in the world; but Terence—is not it Terence?—that says a town consists not of the walls but of the company, was right enough, for our society really is very dry and coarse; Johnson will die on't if he does come, but he hates the idea of being *left out*, he says, so God a mercy.

"Company coming in relieves you, but distresses me; you will read no more nonsense, and I must break off and go and talk fine." *

The fame of *Evelina* had naturally preceded Fanny's advent in Bath. Mr. Crisp's sister, Mrs. Gast, had written to him from Somersetshire early in the previous year, "Nanny Leigh writes me there is a book

* Burney MSS.

The Splendid and Classic Bath

entitled *Evelina* that all Bath are mad after, said to be written by a Miss Burney, daughter of Dr. Burney." Fanny, therefore, was hearing her book talked of on all sides. Chance acquaintance thanked her for the "vast entertainment she had afforded them," and strangers stared at her and eagerly sought for introductions.

Of one of these strangers, a certain Mrs. G., Fanny writes: "She approached us (with an air of tonish stateliness), and seating herself nearly opposite to me, fixed her eyes on my face, and examined it with a superb dignity of assurance that made me hardly know what I said in my answers to Mrs. Lambert and Mrs. Byron." Presently the lady observed to Mrs. Thrale, in an audible whisper, "'She is just what I have heard—I like her vastly,' . . . and looking at me with a smile, the softest she could assume, said, 'I am a great admirer of *Evelina*—I think it has very great merit.'

"I dare say," adds Fanny, "she thought the praise of Dr. Johnson had never been half so flattering to me."

One evening Fanny meets Christopher Anstey, the author of the *Bath Guide*, together with other persons of note, at the house of a Mrs. K.—a Welsh lady "of immense fortune." Looking round complacently upon her guests, Mrs. K. remarks in a whisper to Mrs. Thrale—

The House in St. Martin's Street

"Now, Ma'am, now Mrs. Thrale, I'm quite happy; for I'm surrounded with people of sense! Here's Mrs. Montagu and Mrs. Thrale and Miss Burney. I'm quite surrounded, as I may say, by people of sense!"

Fanny often met Lord Mulgrave in society. Besides being one of the Lords of the Admiralty, he was himself a distinguished Naval Commander, and she had many a lively passage-of-arms with him over what he termed "her ill-usage of the Navy" in the character of Captain Mirvan. When he quitted the neighbourhood she writes: "Lord Mulgrave takes away with him more wit than he leaves behind in all Bath, except what is lodged with Mrs. Thrale. As to Mrs. Montagu, she reasons well and harangues well, but wit she has none. Mrs. Thrale has almost too much; for, when she is in spirits, it bursts forth in a torrent almost overwhelming. Ah! 'tis a fault, she has as much to herself as her virtues!"

CHAPTER XXI

SWEET PACC

To return to the unpublished journal-letters of Susan Burney. She writes to Fanny on April 20th (1780): "Dr. Johnson has just called, but for a minute. He had a coach waiting for him, and would not even sit down, tho' he was very smiling and good-humoured. He came to tell us he accepted an invitation which was sent him this morning to dine with us next Sunday. Mrs. Williams will likewise come." And writing on the 24th, she says: "Yesterday Dr. Johnson and Mrs. Williams came an hour before dinner—at 3 o'clock."

These two friends must have presented a striking contrast in their appearance as they entered the Burneys' parlour. We have already quoted Fanny's description of the Doctor on her first sight of him. Here is another account by a contemporary of Fanny's, Miss Lætitia Hawkins. "His clothes," she says, "hung loose . . . the lining of his coat being always visible.

The House in St. Martin's Street

I can now call to mind," she adds, "his brown hand, his metal sleeve buttons, and my surprise at seeing him with plain wristbands when all gentlemen wore ruffles; his coat sleeves being very wide, showed his linen almost to the elbow. His wig in common use was cut and bushy."

Miss Hawkins has also described the appearance of Mrs. Williams, the "blind poetess." "I see her now," she writes, "a pale, shrunken old lady, dressed in scarlet, made in the handsome French fashion of the day, with a lace cap, with two stiffened projecting wings on the temples, and a black lace hood over it, her grey or powdered hair appearing."

"Dr. Johnson was in very good humour," remarks Susan, "and very charming all day. . . . At dinner he invited me to sit by him. 'Come, my love,' said he, 'it shall be you and I,' and he kissed my hand!—Should I forget *that*?

" . . . Mrs. and Miss Ord arrived at 7 [and] at about 9, Mr. Greville, Dr. Russel, and Mr. Harris came. . . . At eleven Dr. Johnson said to my father, 'When I last looked at my watch, sir, it was eight o'clock, and now it is eleven, and I have not perceived how the time has passed.' And yet," remarks Susan, "he was not asleep any part of it! He was full of wit and brilliancy with Dr. Russel, who alone dared oppose him on

Sweet Pacc

various subjects, but particularly on politics. Dr. Russel defended his opinion with so much frankness, but gave it up, when hard run, with such good-humour, that he drew out Dr. Johnson and contributed greatly to the amusement of the whole company. . . . Latterly the conversation took a more *learned* turn, and Dr. Johnson talked upon the Greek and other languages, chiefly with Mr. Harris. Everybody went away apparently pleased with their visit.

“ . . . I went downstairs with Mrs. Williams, and Dr. Johnson stopped me. ‘And how do you live?’ said he, ‘without Fanny?’ Very ill, I told him.

“ ‘Aye,’ said he, shaking his head and laughing, ‘I hope she will never come back any more!’ ”

About this time Susan formed the acquaintance of Lady Clarges, the beautiful wife of Sir Thomas Clarges. They sympathized with each other in their love of music, and especially in their admiration of Pacchierotti’s singing. Lady Clarges was herself an accomplished musician. She is mentioned by Peter Pindar in a poem upon a “Drawing-room Reception in St. James’s Palace” in the following way :—

“The lovely Lady Clarges too was there,
To all the Graces as to Music born.”

Again we find Lady Clarges identified with

The House in St. Martin's Street

music in the fine portrait of her by Gainsborough, in which she is represented as playing upon the harp.

Among the Burney MSS. there is a packet of letters written by her at this period to Susan Burney. The packet is quaintly docketed by Madame d'Arblay in later years, "A few of the Frisky Letters of the sportive, heedless, happy, and, when she chose it, captivating Lady Clarges."

The first letter is dated "Thursday" only. It runs as follows:—

"MY DEAR MISS S. BURNEY,

"Huzza, huzza, I am so happy. Pacc-hierotti is arrived safe[in England], sweet creature! . . . Pray, pray, my dear sweet Miss Burney, *persuade* him to make me a visit next month. . . . Tell him Lady Droughom* is at Tunbridge with Ansani, and that they walk every evening *al chiero della luna*, so he may take his revenge by cutting her quite and coming to walk with me in the broiling sun.

"God bless you. I cannot write a word more at present, but am

"Ever y^{rs}

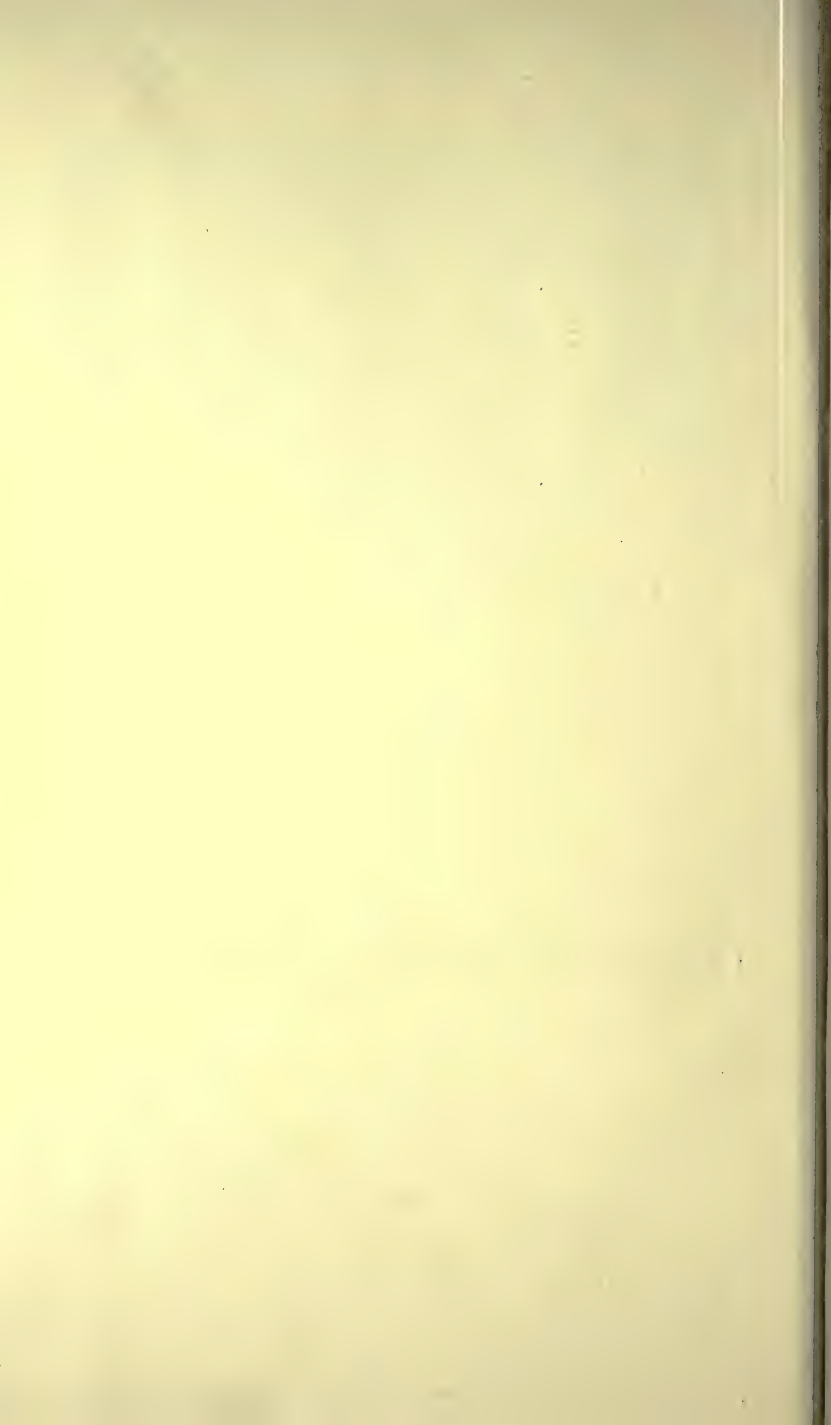
"L. CLARGES."

* Pacchierotti had visited Lady Droughom when last in England.



T. Gainsborough

LADY CLARGES



Sweet Pacc

Again she writes—

“Sunday Night,
“Bortwell.

“CARA PRINCIPESSA,

“I thank you for your kind letter. . . .
I pass my time very pleasantly. I laugh and sing and drive all over the country; have had some pleasant society and envy no one. . . . We are about 9 miles from Windsor. I have been 2 or 3 times to *promener mes graces* upon Windsor Terrace, and to stare at the King and Queen. . . . I had a letter from Pac about six weeks ago . . . and perceive that your sister is a greater favourite with him [than ever].

“. . . Fine work about operas! Noverre is coming for next winter, and we are to have operas of two acts and all the rest dancing. They are to dance all Shakespear's plays and part of the Roman history for the benefit of those grown gentlemen and ladies who have forgot it, or have never read it. Poor Pac will die of a mortification. . . . I have no more bad news to enliven my letter, but remain

“Y^r

“Most humble

“Most obe^t

“Most stupid

“And most idle friend

“L. CLARGES.”

The House in St. Martin's Street

After meeting this lady at an evening party, Susan writes : "Lady Clarges looked really beautiful, was not too highly rouged, [and had] her hair most fancifully and becomingly dressed. . . . She was all good-humour and cordiality to me."

Like Susan, Lady Clarges endeavoured to help Pacchierotti to learn English, but she spoke so rapidly, and used so many words of fashionable slang, that he was often fairly puzzled by her instructions. One day she told him he had "cut her" on some occasion. "Come! vi taglio?" cried he, quite bewildered.

Pacchierotti received great hospitality in the houses of Lady Clarges, Lady Mary Duncan, Lady Edgumbe, and many other ladies of rank, but it was in St. Martin's Street that he found more especially the happiness of friendship. "Sweet Pacc," both Fanny and Susan often call him in their letters to each other. "How my father does love him!" exclaims Susan.

One day we find Pacchierotti telling Susan of his trials caused by the negligent treatment of Mr. Sheridan, who was at that time "Conductor of the Opera House," from whom he was unable to obtain payment for his services.

"Indeed, Mr. Sheridan he use me very ill," cries Pacchierotti. "I assure you I have a great will . . . *voglia, come si dice?*"

"A great *mind*," said I.

Sweet Pacc

"A great mind to call him Rascal. He provoked me too much! . . . I will write him a note."

Accordingly he took from his pocket a bit of paper, and wrote the following lines:—

"Pacchierotti sends his comp^{ts} to Mr. Sheridan, and is very displeased to be obliged to call him a Rascal—but his conduct is in everything so irregular he can give no better title to so great Breaker of his Word. D——n him and his way of thinking, which I wish it may bring him to the Gallows."

He then drew a gallows with a man hanging, and himself at the bottom of it pulling down his leg!

"You will be shocked," says Susan, writing to her sister, "but had you been of the party you must have laughed. . . . He half frightened me, [but] he ended by saying that he was not capable to send anybody such an insult, and when they met should perhaps scarce reproach [Mr. Sheridan] with his breach of word."

When Fanny expresses some alarm on receiving the above account, Susan responds, "Pray don't take too seriously [Pacc's] *incendiary letter* to Mr. Sheridan, for he was laughing *à gorge déployée* all the time he wrote it. . . . Indeed, 'twas done more in sport than malice."

Mr. Sheridan's ill-usage of his musicians was the occasion of a *bon mot* of Mrs. Thrale's. On hearing that the opera singers would not be

The House in St. Martin's Street

likely to get any money from the manager for all their services during the season, she remarked, "Why, that fellow grows fat like Heliogabalus on the tongues of nightingales!"

A few weeks after Pacchierotti's talk with Susan, he was again in St. Martin's Street after having had an interview with Mr. Sheridan. "He spoke . . . with such candour of Mr. S.," writes Susan, "as made me like him better than ever. . . . He said, Mr. Sheridan had assured him . . . he would, in future, be more attentive to matters of business with [him]. '*Pray* do, sir,' said I, clasping my hands; 'for you have all that belongs to a man of genius and of honour—except *punctuality*,' and he laughed so! . . . They parted excellent friends."

In Susan's Journals we read of many a delightful evening in St. Martin's Street spent in listening to the singing of Pacchierotti. On one occasion "he sung," says Susan, "some wild melodies such as the common people of Naples, I think, sing about the streets, which contained the most extraordinary modulations imaginable." Then followed some of his impassioned or pathetic opera songs. "I listened to him," she says, "with a delight which brought tears to my eyes."

There seems to have been an endless variety in the singing of this great master. After hearing him at the Opera House one evening, Susan

Sweet Pacc

writes : "He did a hundred delightful things that I never heard even him attempt before. . . . He made the finest cadences in the world, and



POWDERING CLOSET IN DR. BURNEY'S BEDROOM.

my father, who has such opportunities of watching him, says he never makes the same a second time."

The House in St. Martin's Street

Indeed, Dr. Burney, speaking of this remarkable gift, says, "It made Pacchierotti a new singer to me every time I heard him."*

Pacchierotti frequently performed in operas in conjunction with Madame Le Brun. Dr. Burney says that "she was so cold and instrumental in her manner of singing that they did not well accord together;" and Susan, who felt as her father did, remarks, "Hers is a bad imitation of an instrument; his what no instrumental performer on earth can equal."

On the morning after one of his great achievements, we find Pacchierotti calling in St. Martin's Street, and when he is congratulated by Susan, remarking, "But, Miss Susan, believe me what I tell you—I thought *so* much of your having told me you should be at the Opera."

"What a pretty compliment, and how touching a one was this!" she remarks to her sister. "Well! nobody knew how much they were obliged to *me* for his singing so like a divinity! I think I'll publish it to the world!"

* See Dr. Burney's "History of Music."

CHAPTER XXII

PICTURES IN SOMERSET HOUSE

EARLY in April, Fanny, who was still in Bath, received a letter from Charlotte, in which the writer says, "Edward has just finished three stained drawings in miniature, designs for *Evelina*—and most sweet things they are. . . . My father has shown them to Sir Joshua Reynolds and asked him whether there would be any impropriety in putting them into the Exhibition. Sir Joshua highly approved of the proposal, and sure enough into the Exhibition they are to go . . . he said some very handsome things of them, and was much pleased with a picture (that Edward has introduced into Mr. Villars's parlour) of Dr. Johnson, as he says he thinks it very natural for so good a man as Mr. Villars to have a value for Dr. Johnson."

On receiving this welcome news Fanny wrote a letter to her cousin Edward thanking him "for the honour his pencil and taste had conferred upon her fortunate *Evelina*." "With nothing,"

The House in St. Martin's Street

she adds, "am I so particularly gratified, as with your insertion of Dr. Johnson's picture . . . and proud enough am I that *his* portrait, *your* workmanship, and *my* Dramatis Personæ should thus be united in one performance." *

In the course of the month of May, Fanny and Mrs. Thrale paid a flying visit to London in consequence of a letter from Dr. Johnson urging Mrs. Thrale to take a personal share in canvassing the Borough for her husband's re-election as its Member of Parliament.

Dr. Johnson wrote: "Be brisk, be splendid, and be public. The voters for the Borough are too proud and too little dependent to be solicited by deputies; they expect the gratification of seeing the candidate bowing or curtseying before them. If you are proud they can be sullen. Such is the call for your presence: what is there to withhold you? Mr. Thrale certainly shall not come; and yet somebody must appear whom the people think it worth while to look at." †

Mrs. Thrale went to her house in the Borough, and Fanny returned to her home in St. Martin's Street, which she reached on May 12th.

Susan writes in her Journal soon afterwards: "Saturday morning I went with Fanny to the Exhibition, which is in Somerset Place, for the first time. I was charmed with the building and

* Burney MSS.

† Piozzi Letters.

Pictures in Somerset House

fitting up of the apartments, and infinitely entertained with viewing the pictures."

The Royal Academy of Arts had just removed from Pall Mall, where it had held its Exhibitions for the first eleven years of its existence. Its incorporation by Royal Charter was celebrated by some quaint verses written in 1769, from which we are tempted to quote the following:—

"Let Science hail this happy year—
Let Fame its rising glories sing
When arts unwonted lustre wear,
And boast a patron in their King :
And here unrivall'd shall they reign,
For George protects the polish'd train.

* * * * *

"So shall her sons, in science bred,
Diffuse her arts from shore to shore,
And wide her growing genius spread,
As round the world her thunders roar :
For he who rules the subject main,
Great George—protects the polish'd train."

The passage of a dozen years had not made our writers more modest, for a critic, in reviewing the Exhibition of 1780, remarks: "In all ages the progress of the arts to excellence has been slow and gradual; but it is the singular merit of the Royal Academy of Britain that it has broke through the fetters with which similar institutions have hitherto been confined, and by one rapid stride has attained the pre-eminence of all competitors."

The House in St. Martin's Street

However, there is no doubt that this particular exhibition was a remarkable one from the large number of its pictures which have since become famous.

Dr. Johnson, who was a guest at the Academy dinner of this year, writes to Mrs. Thrale: "The Exhibition is eminently splendid. There is contour and keeping and grace and expression and all the varieties of artificial excellence. The apartments are truly very noble. The pictures, for the sake of a sky-light, are at the top of the house; there we dined, and I sat over against the Archbishop of York. See how I live when I am not under petticoat government!"

Susan, writing of her visit to the Royal Academy, remarks: "On the ground floor in the Drawing Room are Edward's three sketches from *Evelina*, which are the smallest but not the most *unferior* (to use Merlin's word) pieces in the Room."

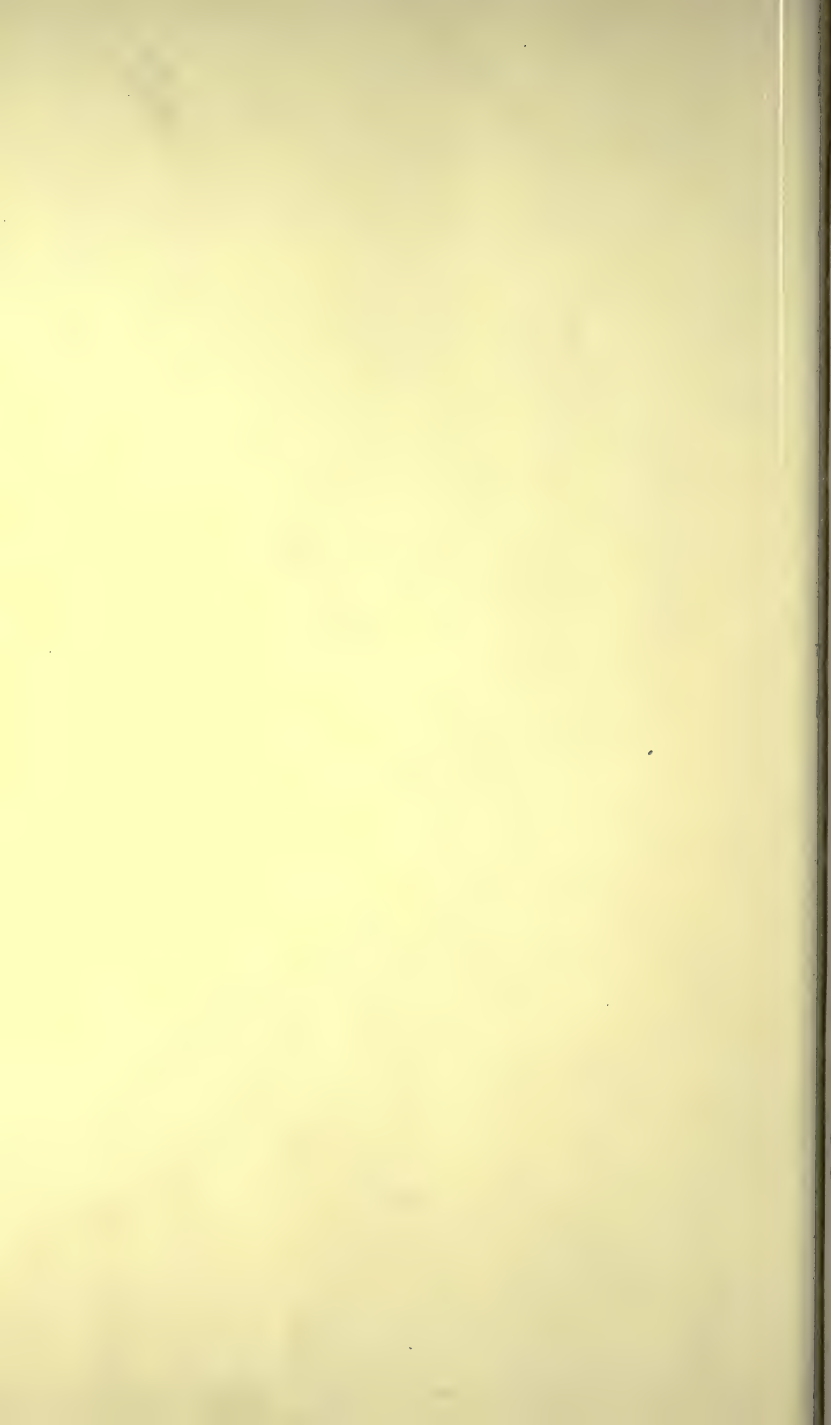
One of these sketches is described by Charlotte as representing "the scene between Evelina and her father, where she is kneeling, and he, in an agony, is turning from her." It is the same scene which so much affected Dr. Burney. The sketch is reproduced for the first time in these pages.

"Upstairs we went," continues Susan, "to a sweet room with emblematical paintings by



SCENE FROM "EVELINA"

From a water-colour drawing by Edward Burney



Pictures in Somerset House

Cipriani, and on the ceiling a figure of Theory in an odious attitude by Sir Joshua Reynolds, then through a statue room, where we did not stop, but passed on to that which is designed for the students. The ceiling of this is painted in four compartments representing the four elements by West; two separate figures at each end by Angelica, representing Study, Design, Colouring, and some other requisite for painting—her design may in every sense be called beautiful. This room is to be decorated by all the Academicians. Sir Joshua has given the King and Queen already whole length, in their robes. They seem both admirable portraits. . . .

“After viewing these rooms we ascended into two others in which the Exhibition is held. . . .

“Gainsborough cuts a great figure this year. He has several charming landscapes, particularly one with a Gipsy family and a great number of admirable portraits. . . . A portrait of Madame Le Brun, a handsome likeness of her . . . and Fischer *so* like, but so handsome . . . He is standing with a pen in his hand before a Piano Forte, his eye cast up, considering whether that passage is worth setting down, his hautbois laying by him and a fiddle on a chair at a little distance—’tis an admirable picture . . . [and] Crodill,* one of the most striking and best

* An accomplished Piano Forte and Harpsichord player.

The House in St. Martin's Street

portraits I think I ever saw in my life. Had I ever longed to speak to Mr. Crosdill, I think I must have done it now."

Of Sir Joshua's pictures Susan mentions his "Una" as "the sweetest thing in the room;" his portrait of Prince William Frederick of Gloucester, "a lovely boy and a most charming picture; a fine portrait of Lady Beauchamp, half length and a whole length of Lord Cholmley."

Angelica Kaufmann, she tells us, had two fancy pictures, one "a figure representing Religion, very small and very sweet;" another, "Modesty embracing Virtuous Love." "Portraits I fancy," she adds, "as Angelica's *imagination* would have afforded more grace and beauty." She speaks of "two of the Lady Waldegraves treading on clouds by [Osias] Humphrey, not a bad picture, but a bad likeness of the ladies 'tis said;" and of "Mrs. Abington as the Comic Muse, a tinted drawing by Cosway, which she did not like;" also of "a cavern with Julia banished thither by Augustus, a charming though terrific painting by Wright of Derby;" and she mentions a picture by Zoffany of a "Room in the Gallery of Florence called the 'Tribune,' containing pictures by Raphael, Correggio, Titian, and other great masters. . . . The style of each painter," she says, "is said to be admirably copied,

Pictures in Somerset House

and in the foreground are portraits of a number of English gentlemen who were at Florence when Zoffany was there, among whom Mr. Bruce is instantly discoverable. This picture is an exhibition of itself."

During Fanny's short sojourn in St. Martin's Street she saw many of her friends. One evening, "the Miss Kerwans came to tea," writes Susan, "and Merlin, and while we were drinking it Pacchierotti and Bertoni. They were full dressed, going to the *Concert des Dames*, but sat as long as they possibly could. . . . Once when I assisted Pacchierotti in some word he wanted, 'Ah! Brava! Charming!' he exclaimed. 'You and you,' said he, bowing to me and then to Fanny, 'assist me better than anybody!' He then told us how the Miss Bulls teased him with their fun. "Indeed," I say them, "*I am humbled to death.*" "Oh! *mumbled, mumbled,*" they cry out, and laugh, indeed, as if they would die. Oh, what a hard case is mine!" exclaimed he, half laughing.

"[After he and Bertoni had left] came Piozzi, who I was very happy missed Pacchierotti."

Piozzi appears as both touchy and sensitive in Susan's journals, and as especially jealous of Pacchierotti's popularity. At a concert where the latter had been singing with great effect, Susan says, "Piozzi spoke to me *en passant*,

The House in St. Martin's Street

but walked off on seeing Pacchierotti and Bertoni approach, which indeed I was not sorry for."

Piozzi could never understand the English ladies' custom of being denied to visitors when calls were paid at inconvenient hours, and used to complain to Susan when he suffered that "*cattiva sorte del not à tom.*"

Fanny quitted her home on the 26th of May, and joined Mrs. Thrale at her house in the borough previous to their return to Bath.

"I found my dear Mrs. Thrale," she writes, "so involved in business, electioneering, canvassing, and letter-writing, that, after our first *embrasades*, we hardly exchanged a word till we got into the chaise next morning.

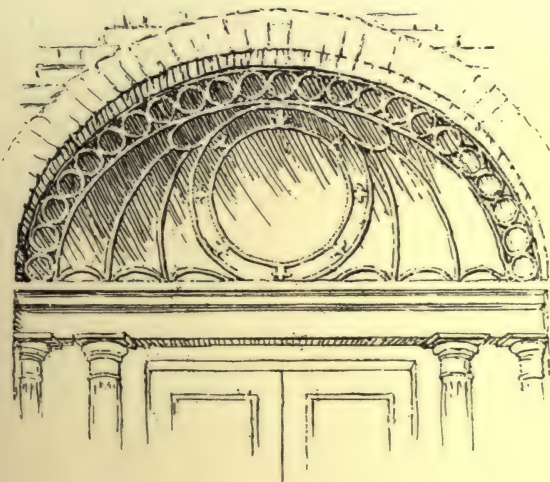
"Dr. Johnson, however, who was with her, received me even joyfully; and making me sit by him, began a gay and spirited conversation, which he kept up till we parted [at night], though in the midst of this bustle.

"The next morning we rose at four o'clock, and when we came downstairs, to our great surprise, found Dr. Johnson waiting to receive and breakfast with us; though the night before he had taken leave of us, and given me the most cordial and warm assurances of the love he has for me, which I do indeed believe to be as sincere as I can wish; and I failed not to tell

Pictures in Somerset House

him the affectionate respect with which I return it, though, as well as I remember, we never came to this open declaration before.

“We . . . drank our coffee with him, and then he handed us both into the chaise.”



CHAPTER XXIII

THE NEW PARNASSUS

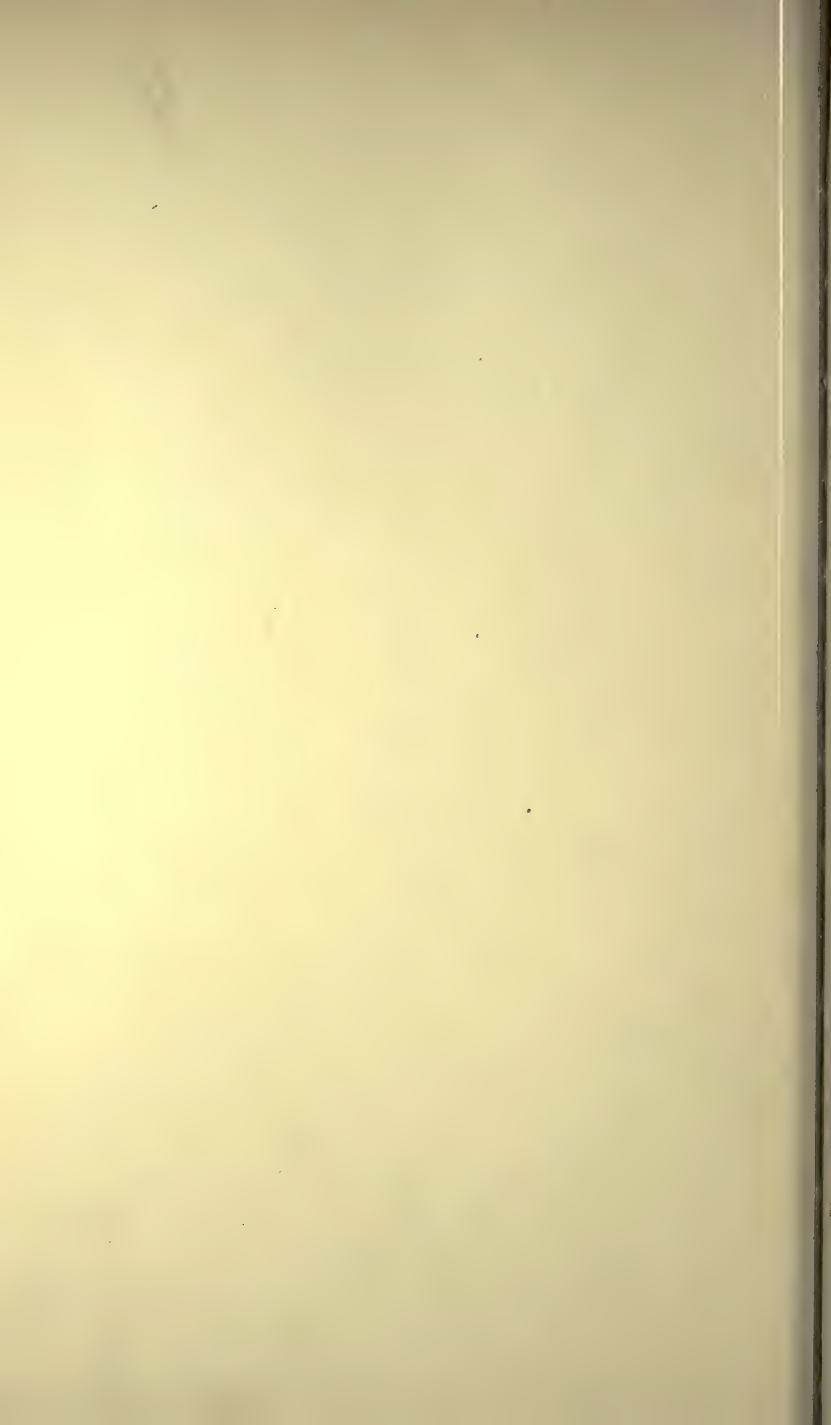
FANNY writes to Susan on a certain Wednesday in May, soon after her return to Bath: "The first thing said to me upon coming downstairs to-day was, 'Here's a letter to Miss Fanny Burney!' 'Is there?' quoth I, 'then I'm sure 'tis from my Daddy Crisp!' I took it, however, and saw 'twas a very different hand. 'Twas from Pacchierotti! . . . 'Tis a very sweet letter, and I am highly delighted with it. In my next I will copy it for you . . . but now I have not a moment to spare, as the house is filling with company, and I must run downstairs. . . . I'm sure I shan't know how to thank him, nor dare say half I shall wish." *

Pacchierotti had been patiently labouring at this English epistle to Fanny, as Susan reports to her sister, some time before despatching it. He had declined all offers of assistance, remarking, "Oh, no!—She—*come si dici?*—She forbade

* Burney MSS.



SUITE OF PARLOURS, SOUTH PARADE.



The New Parnassus

me, prohibited me—hindered me—to show it to anybody. She will have it all my own nonsense, and indeed she is *so agréable*, I could not decline to prove to her my *bestiality*.”

“I would fain,” says Susan, “have persuaded him to use some other word, as I know he only meant *bêtise*, but he said, ‘Oh, *bestiality*, it is a charming word!’”

Fanny, writing on June 4th of her various engagements at Bath, says: “We had an excellent sermon [on Sunday] from the Bishop of Peterborough, who preached merely at the request of Mrs. Thrale. From the Abbey we went to the Pump-room, where we saw . . . the beautiful Miss Ditcher, Richardson’s granddaughter.

“At dinner we had the bishop and Dr. Harrington; and the bishop, who was in very high spirits, proposed a frolic, which was that we should all go to Spring Gardens, where he should give us tea, and thence proceed to Mr. Ferry’s, to see a very curious house and garden. Mrs. Thrale pleaded that she had invited company to tea at home, but the bishop said we would go early, and should return in time, and was so gaily authoritative that he gained his point . . .

“Dr. Harrington was engaged to a patient, and could not be of our party. But the three

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Thrales, the bishop, and I, pursued our scheme, crossed the Avon, had a sweet walk through the meadows, and drank tea at Spring Gardens, where the bishop did the honours with a spirit, a gaiety, and an activity that jovialized us all, and really we were prodigiously lively."

In a Bath Guide for the year 1780 the writer thus describes this place of entertainment—

"Just on the other side of the new bridge, erected by William Pultney, Esq., across the Avon, is a public garden called *Spring Gardens*, very pleasantly and judiciously laid out by *Mr. William Purdie* for the summer amusement and recreation of the inhabitants and company in this city. A good deal of company meet almost every evening in the garden to drink tea, etc. Public breakfasts at 1s. 6d. each are held here on Mondays and Thursdays, when music attends, and dancing, with horns and clarionets."

Fanny, after describing their visit to Mr. Ferry's house, where several odd contrivances were shown to them, tells us that she and her friends had a merry walk home. "Indeed," she says, "we laughed all the way, and thought but little how time went till we were again crossing the Avon, when we were reminded of it by seeing the windows [of our house] full of company."

The party would cross the river by Tompkins'

The New Parnassus

ferry-boat, alighting on the little landing-stage under embowering trees, at the foot of Whitehall Stairs. How they must have hurried up the long flight of steps leading to the South Parade, their house towering above them !

On entering her drawing-room, Mrs. Thrale,



WHITEHALL STAIRS.

“who was in horrid confusion,” found that some of her guests were annoyed at having been kept waiting. “Mrs. Byron,” writes Fanny, “half affronted, had decamped, before we returned, and Mr. Travell, the beau, looked very grim at this breach of etiquette, and made his bow just after we returned. But what was to me most vexatious was finding that Mrs. Carter * had been waiting

* Elizabeth Carter, the translator of Epictetus.

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for us near an hour. . . . As soon as the general apologies were over, Miss Cooper, who knew my earnest desire of being introduced to Mrs. Carter, kindly came up to me, and taking my hand, led me to her venerable friend, and told her who I was. Mrs. Carter arose, and received me with a smiling air of benevolence that more than answered all my expectations of her. She is really a noble-looking woman ; I never saw age so graceful in the female sex yet ; her whole face seems to beam with goodness, piety, and philanthropy.

“She told me she had lately seen some relations of mine at Mrs. Ord's, who had greatly delighted her by their musical talents—meaning, I found, Mr. Burney and our Etty ; and she said something further in their praise and of the pleasure they had given her ; but as I was standing in a large circle, all looking on, and as I kept her standing, I hardly could understand what she said, and soon after returned to my seat. She scarce stayed three minutes longer. When she had left the room I could not forbear following her to the head of the stairs, on the pretence of inquiring for her cloak. She then turned round to me, and looking at me with an air of much kindness, said, ‘Miss Burney, I have been greatly obliged to you long before I have seen you, and must now thank you for the very great entertainment you have given me.’

The New Parnassus

"This was so unexpected a compliment that I was too much astonished to make any answer. However, I am very proud of it from Mrs. Carter, and I will not fail to seek another meeting with her when I return to town."

In an unpublished portion of her Diary, Fanny speaks of going with some friends to see the works of a Mr. Taylor, "a Gentleman painter" who lived in the Circus. "These works," she writes, "consist of Landscapes, Mornings, Evenings, Noons and Nights, as many almost as there are in a year. The views they exhibit are not taken from nature . . . but from his own fancy; sometimes, therefore, probability seems to have been neglected. They are in a very peculiar style,—abounding in splendid ruins, strong light and shade from suns or moons, and most luxuriant and variegated foliage."

On leaving Mr. Taylor's house "[our friend] Mr. Hunt made us accompany him to his house, which was only four or five doors off, to look at some prints. They were a collection which he had purchased abroad, and well worth a long examination, which, however, they were so far from having that we hardly saw even the *size* of *one* before it was covered by *another*;—and so anxious was he to show *each* that in fact we cannot be said to have seen *any*."

Writing of the events of a certain Friday

The House in St. Martin's Street

early in June, Fanny remarks: "In the evening was the last ball expected to be at Bath this season, and therefore, knowing we could go to no other, it was settled we should go to this. Of our party were Mrs. Byron and Augusta, Miss Philips and Charlotte Lewis.

"Mrs. Byron was placed at the upper end of the room by Mr. Tyson, because she is honourable, and her daughter next to her; I, of course, the lowest of our party; but the moment Mr. Tyson had arranged us, Augusta arose, and nothing would satisfy her but taking a seat, not only next to, but below me. . . . She was soon followed by Captain Brisbane, a young officer, who had met her in Spring Gardens . . . and was now presented to her by Mr. Tyson for her partner [in a minuet]."

The mention of Mr. Tyson's name proves that this ball was given in the Old or Lower Rooms, as Mr. Tyson, the reader may remember, had recently been elected Master of the Ceremonies for those rooms.

Bath was very proud of her Dressed Balls, in which the minuets formed a marked feature. Ladies intending to dance a minuet had to give in their names beforehand, and both they and their partners had to appear on the occasion in full dress. In the preamble of the "Rules of the Lower Rooms" for the year 1777, the writer

The New Parnassus

remarks : " It is universally allowed by foreigners as well as by persons of the first distinction in this country . . . that no part of Europe can boast of anything equal to a Dressed Ball in this city ; not only on account of the personal charms of the Ladies, but from the magnificence of the Rooms." " To the highest votary of fashion," observes another writer, " Bath, taken for all in all, almost bids defiance to meet with its like again ! "

" Country dances were now preparing," continues Fanny, " and Captain Bouchier asked me for the honour of my hand, but I had previously resolved not to dance, and therefore declined his offer. But he took of a sudden a fancy to prate with me, and therefore budged not after the refusal." Fanny had previously met this " flighty officer," as she terms him, at a public Breakfast at Spring Gardens, and had been amused at his " careless rattle." He now talked to her of Hannah More, Mrs. Montagu, and Mrs. Carter, and " said most high and fine things of the ladies of the present age ;—their writings and talents." " I soon found," she remarks, " that he had no small reverence for us blue-stockings."

After a while the company adjourned for tea. " When that was over," she continues, " and we all returned to the ball-room, Captain Bouchier

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followed me, and again took a seat next mine, which he kept, without once moving the whole night.

"... Before we broke up this captain asked me if I should be at the play next night. 'Yes,' I could not but say, as we had places taken some time ; but I did not half like it, for his manner of asking plainly implied, 'If *you* go why *I* will.' When we made our exit he saw me safe out of the rooms with as much attention as if we had actually been partners. As we were near home we did not get into chairs ; and Mr. Travell joined us in our walk.

" 'Why, what a flirtation !' cried Mrs. Thrale. 'Why, Burney, this is a man of taste ! Pray, Mr. Travell, will it do ? What has he ?'

" 'Twenty thousand pounds, ma'am,' answered the beau.

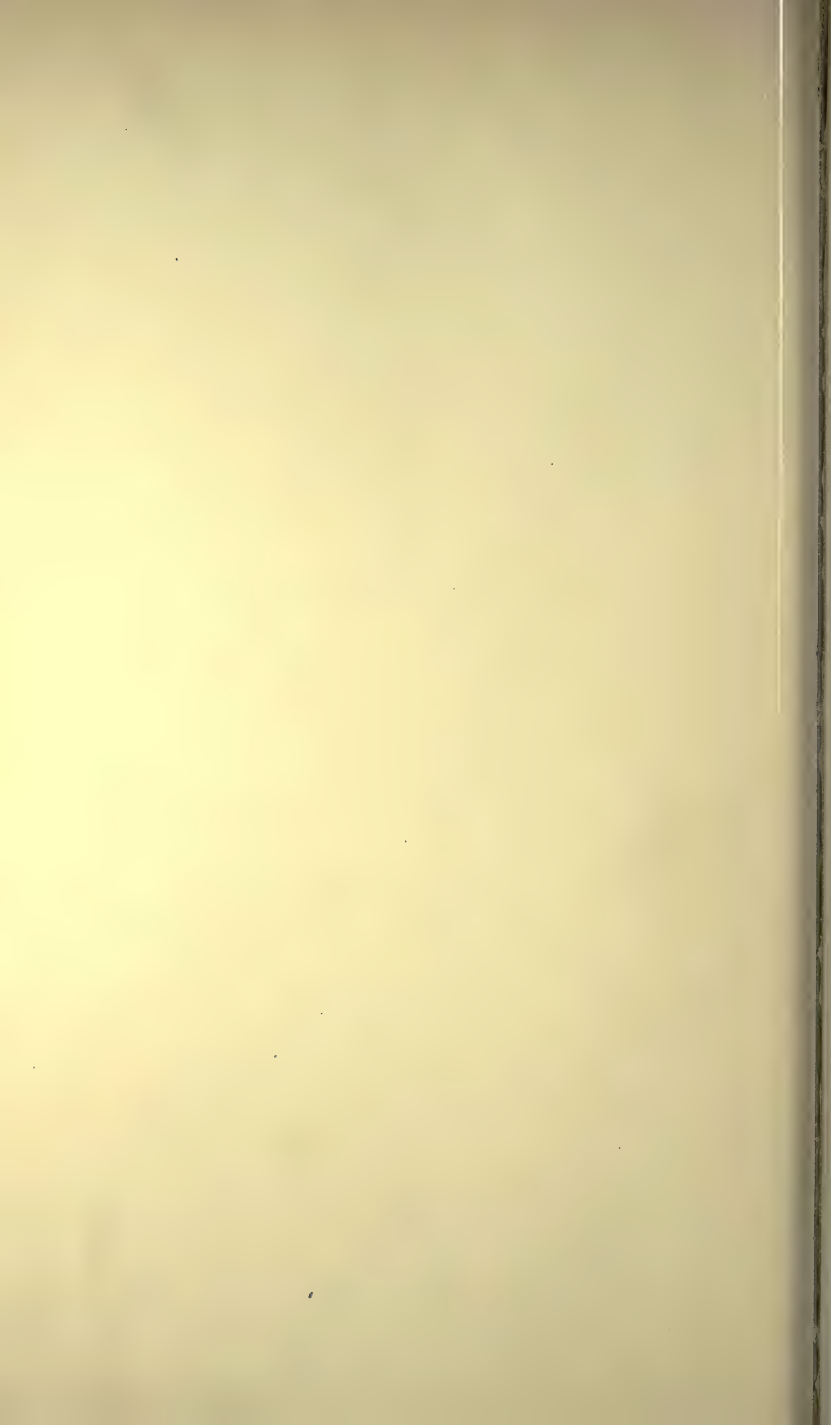
" 'Oh ho ! has he so ?—Well, well, we'll think of it.'

" Finding her so facetious, I determined not to acquaint her with the query concerning the play, knowing that if I did, and he appeared there, she would be outrageous in merriment."

About this time Mrs. Thrale writes to Dr. Johnson : " Our flagstones upon the South Parade burn one's feet through one's shoes ; but the Bath belles, fearless of fire ordeal, trip about secure in cork soles and a clear conscience. . . .



BATH EASTON VILLA.



The New Parnassus

How does Congreve's Life turn out? I expect these Lives to be very clever things after all." And Dr. Johnson writes to her—

"Do you go to the house where they write for the myrtle? You are at all places of high resort, and bring home hearts by dozens; while I am seeking for something to say about men of whom I know nothing but their verses, and sometimes very little of them."

"The house where they write for the myrtle" was none other than the celebrated Bath Easton Villa, which stood, and still stands, about two miles from Bath, upon a green hillside overlooking the valley of the Avon.

Horace Walpole, writing in a satirical vein to a friend of this resort, remarks: "You must know that near Bath is erected a new Parnassus, composed of three laurels, a myrtle-tree, a weeping willow, and a view of the Avon, which has been christened Helicon. They hold a Parnassus fair every Thursday, give out rhymes and 'themes, and all the flux of quality contend for the prizes. A Roman vase, decked with pink ribbons and myrtles, receives the poetry which is drawn out every festival; six judges of these Olympic games retire and select the brightest composition, which the respective successful acknowledge, kneel to Caliope, Lady Miller, kiss her fair hand, and are crowned by it with myrtle."

The House in St. Martin's Street

Fanny writes in her Journal on Thursday, June 8th: "We went to Bath Easton. . . . The house is charmingly situated, well fitted up, convenient and pleasant, and not large, but commodious and elegant. Thursday is still their public day for company, though the business of the Vase is over for this season.

"The room into which we were conducted was so much crowded we could hardly make our way. Lady Miller came to the door . . . took my hand, and led me to a most prodigious fat old lady, and introduced me to her. This was Mrs. Riggs, her ladyship's mother, who seems to have all Bath Easton and its owners under her feet. . . . Sir John was very quiet, but very civil.

"I saw the place appropriated for the Vase, but at this time it was removed."

The Vase used to stand upon a column in the centre of a wide bow-window. We have visited Bath Easton, and have seen that bow-window, and we have also peeped into the adjoining panelled-room where the judges used to retire to award the prizes.

Among the contributions to the Vase, some of which were published in 1781, we find the following lines :—

The New Parnassus

ON THE CLOSING OF THE VASE FOR THE SEASON.

“The glory of this Vase may time prolong
Of Greece and Rome the classic names among ;
No panegyric here can reach the truth
Where wit and beauty charmed th’ enamoured youth.
Ye Muses, soon from Miller’s groves remote,
To plaintive elegy your strains devote ;
Ye dying Swans, the closing Vase surround
And sweetly sing its life and death renown’d.”



CHAPTER XXIV

RIOTERS IN ST. MARTIN'S STREET

SUSAN BURNEY writes in her unpublished Journal-letters on June 8th (1780): "Oh, my dear Fanny! How frightened would you have been had you known what has been passing in St. Martin's Street, and indeed in almost every street in London since I last wrote to you! . . .

"Monday evening last, before my father, mother, and Charlotte returned from Mrs. Reynolds', William came into the parlour with a face of alarm, and told me there was terrible rioting about the streets, and that the mob were breaking several windows in Queen Street and threatening to set fire to some of the houses because they were inhabited by Roman Catholics. The evening before they had burnt down a Chapel in Moor Fields. . . . However, we were to have some of this horrid work before our own eyes, for very shortly after my father [and the others] returned . . . we heard violent shouts and huzzas from Leicester Fields, and William, who went to

Rioters in St. Martin's Street

see what was the matter, returned to tell us that the populace had broke into Sir George Saville's house, and were then emptying it of its furniture. They had piled up the furniture in the midst of the Square, and had forced Sir George's servant to bring them a candle to set fire to it. They would doubtless have set the house itself on fire [also] had not the Horse and Foot Guards prevented [their doing so]. . . . The flames [seen from] our Observatory illuminated the whole Square."

This act of violence marked the commencement of the memorable Lord George Gordon Riots. The rage of the rioters, whose cry was "No Popery," was especially directed against Sir George Saville, because he had recently introduced the Catholic Relief Bill into the House of Commons. This Bill, as it is well known, alarmed some of the more bigoted or ignorant of the Protestants, who determined to get it rescinded, and had chosen the Lord George Gordon, a weak-headed fanatic, as their leader.

Dr. Johnson, writing at this time to Mrs. Thrale, remarks: "On Friday, the good Protestants met in St. George's Fields at the summons of Lord George Gordon, and marching to Westminster, insulted the Lords and Commons, who all bore it with great tameness. At night

The House in St. Martin's Street

the outrages began by the demolition of the mass-house by Lincoln's Inn." *

Susan writes in her Journal: "Tuesday : . . I went to Lady Hales to dinner, and between six and seven in the evening, as we expected [friends] to tea, I took leave. I was somewhat surprised to find the coachman was so surrounded by a mob in Leicester Fields that he could with difficulty get on; however, as I approached St. Martin's Street, I found that the crowd increased. . . . The coachman was unable to turn down our street, which was as crowded as the City is on a Lord Mayor's day, but as he passed by, I saw a great bonfire towards the bottom of it. He set me down, terrified to death, at the corner of Long's Court, and accompanied me to our door. A gentleman, who was passing by, was so good-natured as to make way for me, and to stop till I had entered our house, where I found my mother and Charlotte half out of their wits. They told me that about half an hour before, many hundred people came running down our street huzzaing and shouting, with a blue flag,—that their particular spite here was against Justice Hyde, who has a house towards the bottom of the street, and who had been active in endeavouring to quell the rioters. He was fortunately not in his house, for had he fallen into

* Chapel of the Sardinian Ambassador.

Rioters in St. Martin's Street

their hands I believe he would have been torn to pieces. However, they broke into his house and acted the same part that they had at Sir George Saville's. . . . From our windows we saw them throw chairs, tables, cloathes, in short everything the house contained, into the street, and as there was too much furniture for *one* fire, they made several. I counted six of these fires, which reached from the bottom of the street up to the crossing which separates Orange and Blue Cross Streets. Such a scene I never before beheld! As it grew dusk, the wretches who were involved in smoak and covered with dust, with the flames glaring upon them, . . . seemed like so many infernals. . . .

"One thing was remarkable and convinced me that the mob was secretly directed by somebody above themselves :—they brought an engine with them, and while they pulled Hyde's house to pieces and threw everything they found into the flames, they ordered the engine to play on the neighbouring houses to prevent their catching fire.

". . . When Hyde's house was emptied of all its furniture, the mob tore away the windows and window-frames and began to pull up the floors and the pannels of the rooms. . . . [At last] the Ringleaders gave the word and away they all ran past our windows to the bottom of

The House in St. Martin's Street

Leicester Fields with lighted fire-brands in their hands like so many Furies, [where] they made one great bonfire. [They continued their work of destruction] till between two and three in the morning.

“Early in the evening about 30 Foot Guards, with an Ensign at their head, marched into the street, but the daring populace appeared not the least alarmed, on the contrary, they welcomed them with loud shouts and huzzas. The Ensign made some speech to them, but as I suppose he dared not oppose so many hundred people . . . he [soon] turned round and marched out of the street as he came into it, the mob shouting and clapping the soldiers on their backs as they passed. . . .

“While Mr. Burney, my sister and I stood at the window, the crowd being then greatly diminished, as numbers had flown to attack other places, I saw about ten men and women in a group looking up at our windows. ‘No Popery,’ cried they, and repeated this two or three times. . . . We had no idea that we were ourselves addressed till one of the men said to the rest, pointing to us, ‘They are all three papists!’ ‘For God’s sake,’ cried poor Hetty, ‘Mr. Burney, call out *No Popery* or anything!’ Mr. Burney accordingly got his hat and huzza’d from the window. It went against me to hear him, though it seemed no joke in the present situation of

Rioters in St. Martin's Street

things to be marked out by such wretches as papists. 'God bless your Honour,' they then cried, and went away very well satisfied.

"Before I went to Lady Hales [this] morning, Mr. Burke had passed through our street, where he was beset by a number of wretches, who wanted to extort from him a promise to vote for repealing the Act in favour of the Catholics. My mother saw him and heard him say, 'I beseech you, gentlemen; gentlemen, I beg——' However, he was obliged to draw his sword ere he could get rid of these terrific attendants.

"Baretti called on us, Dr. Gillies, and Edward, who told us the rioters had gone to Newgate, had broke open the prison gates, let loose all that were confined there . . . and had set fire to the place. [That night], on going up to the Observatory, I saw such a scene as I shall never forget, or think of but with horror. Our own Square was rendered as light as day by the bonfire made from [the contents] of Justice Hyde's house, which received fresh fuel every moment, and on the other side we saw the flames ascending from Newgate—a fire in Covent Garden which proved to be Justice Fielding's house—and another in Bloomsbury Square which was at Lord Mansfield's." Here the populace, not content with burning his lordship's "books, pictures, and papers that were invaluable, set the house itself on fire,

The House in St. Martin's Street

[which], except the outward shell, was completely burnt."

A newspaper writer of the day remarks :
" The destruction of Lord Mansfield's house may be considered as a public loss [containing as it did] 300 manuscript volumes of notes and other valuable professional papers written with his own hand, and which were all thus sacrificed to the fury of an ungovernable mob ! "

The poet Cowper has commemorated this event in the following lines :—

" So then—the Vandals of our isle,
Sworn foes to sense and law,
Have burnt to dust a nobler pile
Than ever Roman saw !

" And Murray sighs o'er Pope and Swift,
And many a treasure more
The well-judged purchase and the gift
That graced his lettered store.

" *Their* pages mangled, burn'd and torn,
The loss was *his alone* ;
But ages yet to come shall mourn
The burning of *his own*."

In the *London Chronicle* for June 8th we read that, " A party of the rioters went yesterday to Caen-Wood in order to pull down Lord Mansfield's house [there], but the militia kept so good a guard and received them with such firmness that they thought proper to desist."

Caen-Wood, in reality, owed its safety not so

Rioters in St. Martin's Street

much to the action of the militia, as to the spirited conduct of a single man. After their long march from London, the rioters halted at the "Spaniards Inn," a small tavern on the further side of Hampstead Heath, close to the entrance gates of Caen-



THE "SPANIARDS."

Wood. The innkeeper plied them so well with meat and drink as to keep them safely occupied whilst he despatched a secret messenger, in all haste, to the nearest band of soldiers to call them to the defence of Caen-Wood. The success of his plan, as we have seen, was complete.

One of the most terrible days during the

The House in St. Martin's Street

Gordon Riots was Wednesday, June 7th, known for long afterwards as "Black Wednesday." In a contemporary account by a Mr. Vincent,* we are told that in the afternoon of that day "all the shops were shut and bits of blue silk, by way of flags, hung out at most houses, and the words 'No Popery' chalked on the doors and window shutters by way of deprecating the fury of the insurgents from which no person thought himself secure . . . The very Jews in Houndsditch and Duke's Place were so terrified that they followed the general example by writing on their shutters, 'This house is a true Protestant!'

"Men paraded the streets, armed with iron bars, extorting money at every [house-door], huzzaing and shouting 'No Popery!' and the inhabitants durst not refuse them money. One man, in particular, was mounted on horseback, and refused to take anything but gold . . . the whole city was laid under contribution.

"The mob," continues the writer, "had not only declared their resolution of firing the prisons and some private houses, but had avowed their intention to destroy the Bank, Gray's Inn, the Temple, Lincoln's Inn, the Grand Arsenal at Woolwich, and Royal Palaces. A universal

* "A Plain Narrative of the Late Riots and Disturbances in the Cities of London and Westminster and Borough of Southwark," by William Vincent, of Gray's Inn, 1780.

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stupor had seized the minds of men. They looked at one another, and waited with a resigned consternation for the events which were to follow."

Some attempt at defence, however, was made by the authorities, who placed bands of soldiers to protect the Bank, the Guildhall, the Inns of Court, etc., and had cannon mounted in the parks. But in spite of these precautions, as darkness approached the terrified inhabitants "beheld at the same instant the flames ascending from the King's Bench, and Fleet prisons, from New Bridewell, from the Toll-gates on Blackfriars' Bridge, from houses in every quarter of the town, and particularly from the bottom and middle of Holborn, where the conflagration was horrible beyond description."

Susan Burney writes in her Journal, "On going into the Observatory we saw a yet more lamentable and shocking appearance than that of the preceding evening. Such a fire I never beheld as one of four that were burning with violence at that time. We afterwards found it was the house of a great distiller on Holborn Hill, which, as he was a Papist, was set on fire, and that the flames communicated very quickly to a prodigious number of small houses adjoining."

This distillery, Mr. Vincent tells us, contained immense quantities of spirituous liquors, and that as the vessels holding them caught fire,

The House in St. Martin's Street

"the liquor ran down the middle of the street and was taken up by pailfuls and held to the mouths of the besotted multitude, numbers of whom perished from inebriation."

"Another great fire," continues Susan, "was from the Fleet Prison, [while] the King's Bench was in flames on the other side of us. We could hear the huzzas, shouts and firing, and shrieks from some of these terrible scenes of fury and riot."

The Burney household were all up and astir during that awful night, each one endeavouring to cheer and comfort the others. At last, however, the flames began to subside, and when Susan looked from the Observatory windows, at 4 o'clock in the morning, all that remained, she says, to mark the scene of devastation in Holborn, was one great column of smoke.

Horace Walpole, it seems, had witnessed the conflagration from the top of Gloucester House. Writing to a friend of his experiences of that night, he exclaims: "What families ruined! What wretched wives and mothers! What public disgrace!—Aye! and where and when and how will all this confusion end? and what shall we be when it is concluded? I remember the Excise and the Gin Acts, and the rebels at Derby, and Wilkes's interlude, and the French at Plymouth; but I never, till last night, saw London and Southwark in flames!"

CHAPTER XXV

A REIGN OF TERROR

"WE now found," writes Susan, "that we were in the most imminent danger ourselves, that our house would be burnt or pillaged, in all probability, and that inevitable ruin must follow to my beloved father, and to all that belong to him. The Chapel on one side of our house, Porter's house at the back of it, the Pawnbroker's on the other side, Mr. Drummond's in Leicester Fields, and the house nearly opposite to us, at the corner of Blue Cross Street, were all destined to the flames, and there was not the slightest reason to hope that *our* house, encircled by so many fires, should escape.

"... My mother, who looked *jaundiced* with terror, wanted us all to set off instantly for Chesington, but this seemed to me a very wild scheme; since our house, had it escaped the flames, would then have been probably emptied of its contents by the late Newgate prisoners and their friends. . . . At last I proposed sending

The House in St. Martin's Street

some [of our] things to the Boyles', my sister's and Mr. Kirwan's houses, which seemed all less exposed than our own to fire. . . . Accordingly our plate was packed up, and my father himself went in a coach with it to the Boyles'. When he returned home . . . I assisted him to pack up his MS. papers in large bags, which we sent by William, in our coach, to my sister's, where they were taken in.

"We now sent a 2nd coachfull with my father's cloathes, my mother's and some other portable things, [but] William soon came back with all the things he had taken in the 2nd journey, and told us that Tavistock Street was so full of Rioters, who were knocking at several doors with great fury, that he thought it was not safe to carry them into Mr. Burney's house."

Susan learnt from her sister that the Rioters in Tavistock Street came for money, which they demanded with authority, and declared it was for the poor prisoners they had rescued from Newgate. "Everybody," said Hetty, "gave half-crowns, and some more."

"Thursday, the 8th of June, was a memorable day," writes Susan. "My dear father went out early into the city . . . on foot and visited every spot where the Rioters had been most busy. Saw the ruins of Newgate, where everybody went in and out as freely as they walk under the Piazzas

A Reign of Terror

in Covent Garden—went to the Bank, which had been attempted to be broke into three times the preceding evening, but was fortunately preserved by the soldiers. He took some money in order, dear Soul, to pay everybody to whom he owed anything while he had anything to give them. For this purpose he went to Mr. Bremner's and Mr. Coutts'. 'If we must be ruined,' said he, 'at least I will have the satisfaction of not owing a guinea in the world.' He then visited Lord Townshend, and freely spoke his opinion as to the necessity of some spirited exertion in the King or Ministers to put a stop to the horrid proceedings of a set of lawless, daring and inhuman ruffians."

A strange apathy, as we have seen, seems to have taken possession of the mind of the public during this time of danger. Dr. Johnson writes to Mrs. Thrale on June 9th: "On Wednesday I walked with Dr. Scot to look at Newgate, and found it in ruins, with the fire yet glowing. As I went by the Protestants were plundering the Sessions-house at the Old Bailey. There were not, I believe, a hundred, but they did their work at leisure, in full security, without sentinels and without trepidation as men lawfully employed, in full day."

Mr. Richard Burke, in a letter to a friend, says that he saw some mere boys demolishing a

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house and burning its effects, no one daring to obstruct them. "Children," he exclaims, "are plundering at noon-day the city of London!"

We learn from another source that two gentlemen "who were standing under the wall of St. Andrew's Church, Holborn, while the great Distillery was blazing fiercely, noticed the watchman walk by at his usual pace, calling the hour!"

In the same column of the *Morning Chronicle* that gives full details of the rioters' outrages we find a paragraph giving equally full details of a Court Reception in St. James's Palace. After describing the attire of the ladies, the writer goes on to say: "The gentlemen's dresses were, for the greater part, of spring silks, flowered and plain, with tissue waistcoats." His Majesty is described as wearing a "coat of pea-green striped silk."

Curiously enough, apathy in the public went side by side with extreme terror, which moved people to do anything in their power to propitiate the rioters. We are informed by the newspapers of the day, that each night the great city merchants illuminated their houses as a sign of sympathy with the mob, while in the daytime, hundreds of people wore blue cockades for the same reason.

"It will probably be a black night," writes

A Reign of Terror

Horace Walpole on June 7th. "I am decking myself with blue ribbons like a May-day garland."

In the *Morning Post* for June 9th a writer remarks : "No business was transacted yesterday throughout the cities of London and Westminster, every shop being shut from Whitechapel to Tyburn turnpike."

To return to the Burney household.

In spite of the dangers which surrounded them, Susan determined to make her way to her aunts' house in York Street, Covent Garden, that she might at least endeavour to cheer them. "I found my aunts," she writes, "as I expected, terrified to death. The rioters had been in their street the preceding night to levy contributions on all its inhabitants. By accident they passed by [my aunts'] door without stopping, but afterwards somebody marked an O upon it, which it seems the rioters did on the doors of all [persons] who did not give sufficient [money] to satisfy them, [and where] they might take measures to be revenged. No wonder my aunts were alarmed. I passed by Justice Fielding's house on my way to York Street, the mere shell of which remains. It has been more completely demolished than Hyde's."

During all this time of danger the Burneys had felt keen anxiety on behalf of their Italian

The House in St. Martin's Street

friends, who, as being both Roman Catholics and foreigners, would be especially obnoxious to the rioters. One day Pacchierotti called in St. Martin's Street. "I was astonished to see him," writes Susan, "and to hear he came on foot. His countenance was as serene as ever I saw it, and he declared to me he was not in the least frightened. I dared not tell him how frightened I was myself for him. [But] I begged he would not expose himself by walking about alone at such a time as this, when the city seemed to be inhabited by wild beasts, not human creatures. 'Why should I fear?' said he, smiling. 'I have committed no fault. . . . To say the truth, I am not alarmed, because the English nation, it seem to me, is composed of good-hearted, mild people.'

"He told me that Mr. Bertoni was terribly frightened. 'He trembles,' said he, 'like a leaf, as a *litttel* child! I could not persuade him to come here with me.' Pacchierotti told me many people had advised him to take his name off his door, but he said he did not intend to do it."

Both Giardini and Sacchini had not only done this, but had had "No Popery" chalked on their doors. "Had Pacchierotti been in our part of the town," continues Susan, "his fearlessness, even in this particular, would have frightened me

A Reign of Terror

for him, but I have heard of no disorders at all towards Cavendish Square."

Horace Walpole, writing to a friend at this same time, speaks of returning late in the evening to a house in the West End and seeing on his way "Charing Cross, the Haymarket, and Piccadilly all illuminated from fear . . . though all this end of the town," he remarks, "is hitherto perfectly quiet, lines being drawn across the Strand and Holborn to prevent the mob coming westward." He concludes his letter with a touch of characteristic humour. "As it is now three in the morning, I shall wish you good night, and try to get a little sleep myself, if Lord George Macbeth has not murdered it all. I own I shall not soon forget the sights I saw from the top of Gloucester House!"

Among other visitors in St. Martin's Street, at this time, Susan mentions "Mr. Davaynes, [who] showed us," she remarks, "a blue cockade which, he said, had been his *passport* through the mob. . . . Sir Joshua Reynolds called," she says, "and said he should afterwards go to Mr. Burke, whose house was threatened to be served in the same manner as Sir George Saville's that night. However, we hear it has escaped."

The rioters had marked Somerset House as one of the buildings to be destroyed on "Black Wednesday." This fact was known to every one,

The House in St. Martin's Street

but Sir Joshua Reynolds, true to his post as head of the Royal Academy, spent that anxious day within its walls. His doing this is proved by a simple entry in his pocket-book.

Happily by the 9th June affairs had begun to assume a better aspect. Public spirit was arousing, and we read in the *Morning Post* of that date, "The barristers and students of the Temple, with Mr. Mansfield at their head, have armed themselves for the defence of that inn of Court, and are spiritedly determined to hazard their lives in its protection."

And again, "The coal-heavers at Wapping and the Irish chairmen have formed an association to oppose the rioters."

Dr. Johnson, writing to Mrs. Thrale on that same days, says: "The King said in council that the magistrates had not done their duty, but that he would do his own, and a proclamation was published directing us to keep our servants within doors, as the peace was now to be preserved by force."

Susan, describing the events of Thursday the 8th, writes: "In the evening we were to remove some more of my father's MSS., books, cloathes, etc. Charlotte had the day before made a compleat packing up of everything which belonged to her. I had no heart to set about this sort of work for myself. . . However, not to pass for

A Reign of Terror

fool-hardy, at about six in the evening I looked out and began to make up a parcel of my own cloathes, etc. Horrid work enough! But my dear father's return home [from a visit to the city] carried me downstairs, where I found all the family rejoicing and exulting [in our safety]."

Dr. Burney had brought the welcome news that a large body of troops had arrived in London, that they had already attacked and beaten a portion of the rioters, and that there was every hope that peace and security would soon be re-established.

"Since then," continues Susan, "I have done nothing but thank God every moment for the escape we have had, and for the yet greater escape which the poor Catholic inhabitants of this place have had, from the rage of a set of savages.

"On Thursday scarce any one had the courage to walk about without a blue ribbon in their hats. Now not *one*, anywhere, is to be seen.

"I would fain," continues Susan, "have gone to my sister's to carry the good news, but my father was afraid to let me venture, even in the coach, lest any mob should be assembled, [for] the soldiers are ordered to fire [on them], and hand bills are given out to warn all quiet, peaceable people to keep within doors, lest they should meet a fate only intended for the riotous and daring.

The House in St. Martin's Street

"We all went quietly to bed that night at 12 o'clock, and had the first tolerable night's rest which has fallen to our share since last Monday.

"Oh, my Fanny!" exclaims Susan to her sister. "If you had not respected and loved our blessed father *before*, how would you have revered and idolized him could you have seen him this last week—comforting the distressed—animating the powerful—and attentive to every one's interest more than his own. . . . God send [our present] state of tranquillity may take root!"

Dr. Johnson, writing to Mrs. Thrale on June 10th, says: "The soldiers are stationed so as to be everywhere within call; there is no longer any body of rioters. . . . Lord George was last night sent to the Tower. . . . Everybody walks and eats and sleeps in security. But the history of the last week would fill you with amazement. It is without any modern example."

CHAPTER XXVI

A FLIGHT FROM BATH

ON returning home from their visit to Bath Easton, Fanny and her friends first heard rumours of the disturbances in London. News travelled so slowly in those days that when writing to her father, even as late as June 9th, we find her still ignorant of all details.

“My dearest Sir,—How are you?” she asks, “and what is to come next? The accounts from town are so frightful, that I am uneasy, not only for the city at large, but for every individual I know in it. I hope to Heaven that, ere you receive this, all will be once more quiet; but till we hear that it is so, I cannot be a moment in peace. . . . Oh, what dreadful times!

“ . . . I am very anxious indeed about our dear Etty. Such disturbances in her neighbourhood, I fear, must have greatly terrified her, and I am sure she is not in a state of health to bear terror.

“All the stage-coaches that come into Bath

The House in St. Martin's Street

from London are chalked over with 'No Popery,' and Dr. Harrington called here just now and says the same was chalked this morning upon his door, and is scrawled in several places about the town.

"*Friday night.* The above I writ this morning, before I recollected this was not post-day, and all is altered here since. . . . To our utter amazement and consternation the new Roman Catholic Chapel in this town was set on fire at about nine o'clock. It is now burning with a fury that is dreadful, and the house of the priest belonging to it is in flames too. The poor persecuted man has, I believe, escaped with life, though pelted, followed, and very ill-used. Mrs. Thrale and I have been walking about with the footmen several times. . . . The rioters do their work with great composure, and though there are knots of people in every corner, all execrating the authors of such outrages, nobody dares oppose them."

On that same night Mrs. Thrale wrote to a friend: "The flames of the Romish Chapel are not yet extinguished, and the rioters are going to Bristol to burn that. Their shouts are still in my ears, and I do not believe a dog or cat in the town sleeps this night."

Fanny writes again to her father on Saturday, June 10th: "I was most cruelly disappointed in

A Flight from Bath

not having one word to-day. I am half crazy with doubt and disturbance in not hearing. Everybody here is terrified to death. We have intelligence that Mr. Thrale's house in town is . . . threatened by the mob with destruction. Perhaps he may himself be a marked man for their fury. . . . Some infamous villain has put it into the paper here that [he] is a papist.

“ . . . We are going directly from Bath, and intend to stop only at villages. To-night we shall stop at Warminster, not daring to go to Devizes. This town is now well guarded, but still we dare not await the event of to-night; all the Catholics in the town have privately escaped.

“I know not now,” she continues, “when I shall hear from you. I am in an agony for news. Our headquarters will be Brighthelmstone, where I do most fervently entreat you to write—do, dearest sir, write—if but one word—if but only you name YOURSELF! Nothing but your own hand can now tranquillise me. . . . God bless—defend—preserve you! my dearest father. Life is no life to me while I fear for your safety.

“God bless and save you all!”

Rumours of the outrages committed in Bath soon reached London. Horace Walpole writes to a friend on June 12th: “Last night at Hampton Court I heard of two Popish Chapels demolished in Bath, and one at Bristol. My

The House in St. Martin's Street

coachman has just been in Twickenham, and says half Bath is burnt."

Susan writes to Fanny on the same day: "I had just written the last word of my narrative [of the riots] when my dear father came in from the



THE "WHITE HART," SALISBURY.

Opera with a countenance so changed since he had parted from us, that it frightened me even before he opened his lips. After a little time he told us that Mr. Sheridan had informed him an express had arrived from Bath, in which place the colliers had risen and beaten out the King's troops that were stationed there. My letter was

A Flight from Bath

scarcely gone, however, when it was suggested by my father that Mr. Thrale would surely leave Bath instantly on the breaking out of such a terrible commotion." *

Fanny writes to her father from Salisbury on June 11th: "Here we are, dearest sir, and here we mean to pass this night. We did not leave Bath till eight o'clock yesterday evening, at which time it was filled with dragoons, militia, and armed constables, not armed with muskets but bludgeons. These latter were all chairmen, who were sworn by the mayor in the morning for petty constables. . . .

"We set out in the coach-and-four, with two men on horseback, and got to Warminster . . . a little before twelve."

The Thrales were in keen anxiety, all this time, for the fate of their great brewery, and also for that of their house in the Borough; but on reaching Salisbury news arrived from London to relieve them of their fears.

Mrs. Thrale writes to Dr. Johnson: "Safe! safe! safe! Sir Philip,† kind creature, has been more than charming; he has saved us all by his friendly activity. God bless him! Do go to his house and thank him; pray do, and tell him how I love him. He loves *you*, and a visit from Dr. Johnson will be worth forty letters from me,

* Burney MSS.

† Sir Philip Jennings Clarke.

The House in St. Martin's Street

though I shall write instantly. Perkins has behaved like an Emperor! . . . The villains *had* broke in, and our brew-house would have blazed in ten minutes, when a property of £150,000 would have been utterly lost, and its once flourishing possessors quite undone."

Sir Philip, it seems, had contrived to get a band of soldiers into the brewery in all haste; whilst Perkins had kept "the mob amused with meat, drink, and huzzas."

Fanny received a letter at this same time from Charlotte, in which her sister writes: "Thank Heaven, everybody says now that Mr. Thrale's house and brewery are as safe as we can wish them. There was a brewer in Turnstile that had his house gutted and burnt because the mob said 'he was a *papish*, and sold popish beer.' Did you ever hear of such diabolical ruffians?"

". . . It sounds almost incredible, but they say that on Wednesday night last, when the mob was more powerful, more numerous, and outrageous than ever, there was, nevertheless, a number of exceedingly genteel people at Ranelagh, though they knew not but their houses might be on fire at the time."

Fanny, writing from Salisbury on June 11th, says: "This morning two more servants came after us from Bath, and brought us word that

A Flight from Bath

the precautions taken by the magistrates, last night, had had good success, for no attempt of any sort had been renewed towards a riot. But the happiest tidings to me were contained in a letter from Mr. Perkins with an account that all was quiet in London, and that Lord G. Gordon was sent to the Tower.

“ . . . We intended,” she continues, “ to have gone to a private town, but find all quiet here, and therefore prefer it as much more commodious.”

The inn at Salisbury, where Fanny and the Thrales stayed, was in all probability the “ White Hart,” as it was the chief inn of the place at that time ; and the Thrales, being wealthy, secured every comfort when travelling.

The following unpublished letter of Fanny’s, addressed to her father, enables us to follow the party in their journey :—

“ Southampton,
“ June 13th.

“ MY DEAREST SIR,

“ We arrived here yesterday about 7 in the evening, but the Post always leaves this town in the morning, and therefore I could not write.

“ Everything here is perfectly tranquil, and we procured a *Morning Post* of yesterday that assures us of the restored tranquillity of London.

The House in St. Martin's Street

We are therefore now travelling merely for pleasure, and as we were hurried from Bath by fear of riots, we mean to make ourselves amends by a pleasant tour in these parts.

“. . . Our next exploit is to see Portsmouth, the shipping, etc., and thence I believe to Spithead. Adieu, most dear Sir. My best love to all, and believe me,

“ Most dutifully

“ and most affectionately,

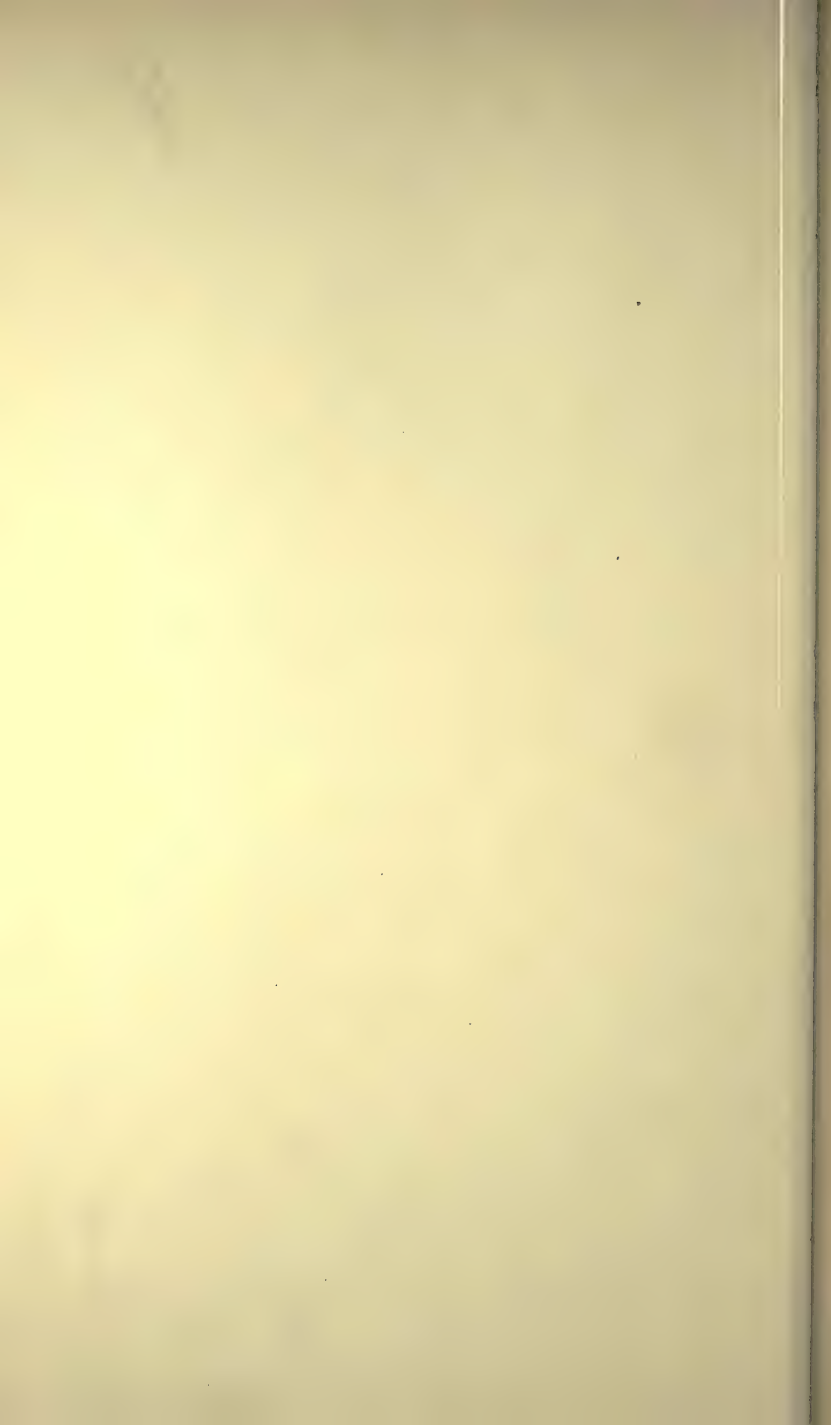
“ Your F. B.”

The above letter was probably written in the “Dolphin Inn,” which stands in the High Street of Southampton, and is conspicuous for its bowed-windows and its wide entrance, leading to the coaching-yard behind. The “Dolphin” was the chief inn of the town in those days. Here the winter Assembly balls were held; the dancing taking place in a long panelled room, now divided into three rooms, from which the two bowed-windows project.

From Southampton the travellers proceeded to Portsmouth, where it seems likely they may have stayed at the “Fountain Inn,” which is one of the three “elegant inns” mentioned in a contemporary Portsmouth Guide-book. It stands in the High Street, nearly opposite the old parish church.



CORRIDOR IN THE "DOLPHIN INN," SOUTHAMPTON.



A Flight from Bath

Fanny passed much of the late summer and early autumn of this year (1780) with the Thrales; but in the month of November she was at Chesington, having stopped on her way thither for a day and night in St. Martin's Street.

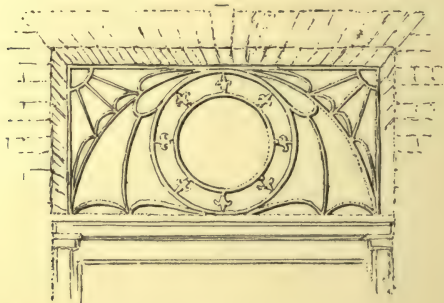
She writes to Mrs. Thrale—

"As I spent only one day in town, I gave it wholly to my sisters, and they to me; and in the morning we had by chance such a meeting as we have not had for very many years. My two brothers, Susan and Charlotte and myself, were of course at home, and Hetty, accidentally . . . called in while we were all at breakfast. I ran upstairs and dragged my father down out of his study, to see once more all together his original progeny, and when he came, he called out, 'Offspring! Can you dance?'"

After describing a welcome visit, during the evening, from Pacchierotti, Fanny goes on to say: "I had no other adventure in London, but a most delightful incident has happened since I came here [to Chesington]. We had just done tea on Friday, and Mrs. Hamilton, Kitty, Jem, and Mr. Crisp were sitting down to cards when we were surprised by an express from London, and it brought a 'Whereas we think fit' from the Admiralty to appoint Captain Burney to the command of the *Latona*, during the absence of the Honourable Captain Conway. This is one

The House in St. Martin's Street

of the best frigates in the navy, of thirty-eight guns, and immediately, I believe, ready for service. Jem was almost frantic with ecstasy of joy; he sang, laughed, drank to his own success, and danced about the room with Miss Kitty till he put her quite out of breath. His hope is to . . . get out immediately, and have a brush with some of the Dons, Monsieurs, or Mynheers, while he is in possession of a ship of sufficient force to attack any frigate he may meet."



CHAPTER XXVII

PEACE AND PLAYFULNESS ONCE MORE

LET us take up Susan Burney's unpublished Journals again.

As we turn over the large square pages, we come to the following account of a musical gathering which took place in St. Martin's Street in the autumn of 1780. After mentioning the arrival of Pacchierotti, Bertoni, and Cramer, and also of a Mr. Dance, whose name occurs here for the first time, Susan goes on to say : "Mr. Burney and my sister had engaged themselves to dine with Mrs. Ord ; it now grew late, and my father was on tenter hooks at not seeing them, and at last took up a tenor himself that something might be begun. Cramer produced his fiddle, Mr. Dance the violoncello, and they played a very pretty trio of Hoffman's which my father brought in MS. from Germany. Immediately after, they played a charming trio of Vanhall's, during the last movement of which Mr. Burney arrived, and my sister. . . . Mr.

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Burney now took the violoncello, Mr. Dance a violin to second Cramer, and my father continued at the tenor. They then played a quartetto of Vanhall's *in a*, one of the most charming compositions I ever heard, full of fancy . . . and new as if it were dropt from the clouds."

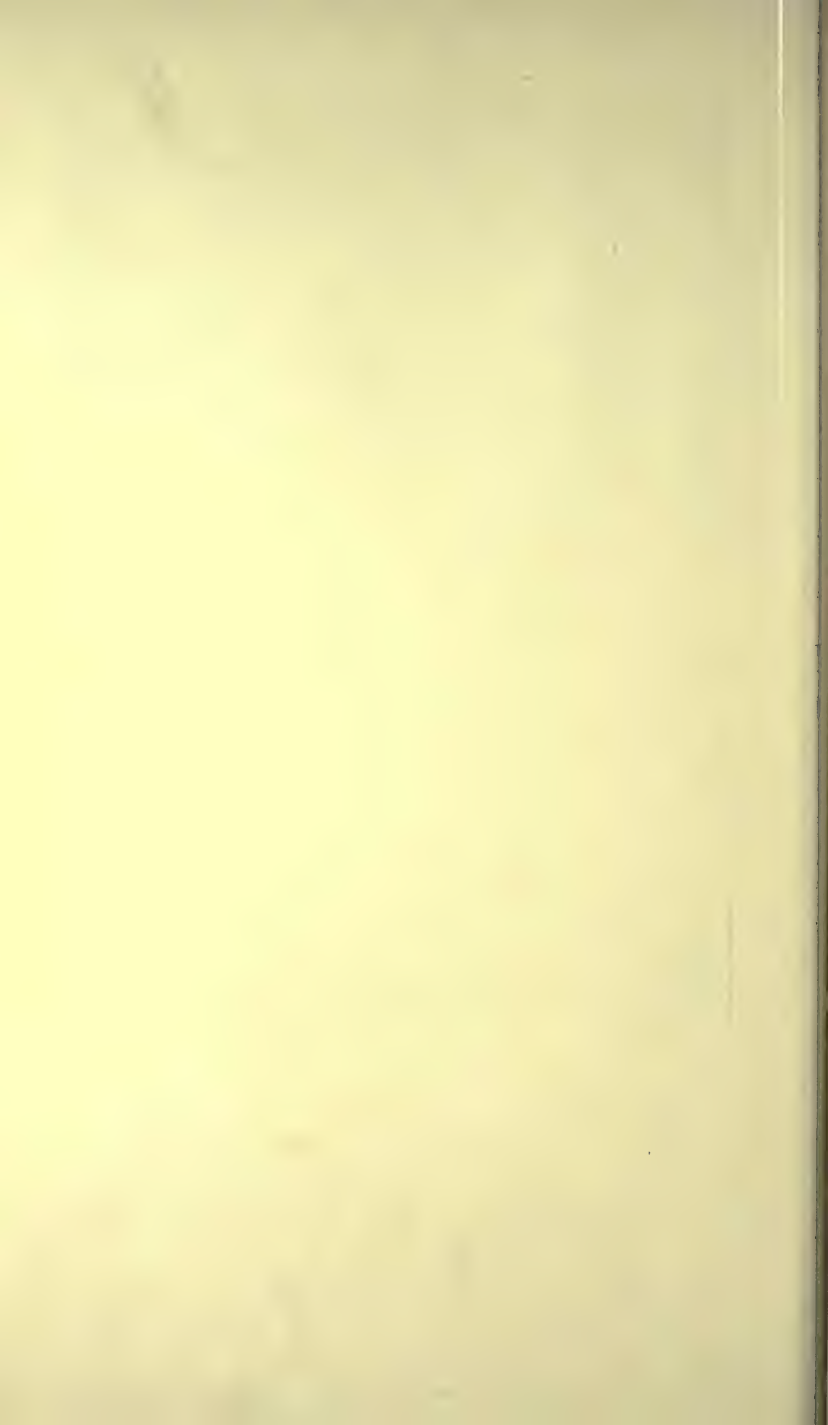
Pacchierotti being pressed to sing, declined doing so until Mr. Burney had given the company one of his brilliant performances on the harpsichord. This over, Cramer took Mr. Burney's place at the instrument, while Dance resumed his violoncello, and thus accompanied, Pacchierotti struck into one of his most popular songs in the "Olimpiade." "When it was over," writes Susan, "I told him I had heard him sing this Rondeau as many times as I had fingers, which is, I believe, literally true, and that he was always new, and seemed to me to sing it more perfectly every time I heard him. 'Oh!' cried he, 'Miss Burney is so encouraging to me in every thing—in music, in language . . . but I am afraid, sometimes,' he added, 'that they are my intentions which are only good.'

"Pacchierotti . . . continued talking to me till our attention was called off by Cramer, who played a solo of his own most admirably, and exerted himself as much as if he had been [playing] before a thousand people. . . . Pacchierotti told me he had been worshipping Cramer.



T. Gainsborough

CHARLES ROUSSEAU BURNEY



Peace and Playfulness once more

Indeed . . . he speaks of him in the highest terms that are possible. . . . The evening was delightfully concluded by a charming quartetto of Haydn's, in which Cramer played incomparably."

Cramer, like Pacchierotti, had experienced ill-usage from Sheridan. "Shameful, is it not?" writes Susan. "But Mr. Sheridan behaves to all alike, I believe." Then comparing Cramer's character with that of Giardini, she says, "He seems to have none of Giardini's satirical wit, but to possess a worthy, benevolent mind, which inclines him to wish peace to all mankind."

Many an old friend or new acquaintance would drop in upon the Burney household at their tea-hour.

"Tuesday sennight in the evening," writes Susan, "Mr. Fontana called with a German gentleman to speak concerning a Pianoforte which my father promised to procure for the former. . . . My father was not visible. However, as foreigners you know are never at a loss, they sat down and stayed tea; though, as Mr. Fontana speaks no English, he never attempted to converse with my mother or Charlotte, which I regretted more on their account than my own, as indeed he is an intelligent, polite, and exceeding entertaining man. The German, who speaks a great deal of very bad English, and whose French is not much better, divided his

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attention among us. . . . Wednesday evening, just before tea, these two gentlemen called again to inquire after *Dr. Borne*, and though he was again *not a' tom*, as Piozzi writes it, they entered, drank tea with us, and stayed pretty late. Thursday evening I really could scarce forbear laughing when Mr. Fontana and his German friend were again announced—3 days following! . . . Soon after their arrival came Mr. Franco, a Jew, and another gentleman with a face very like an owl, and with a gravity and steadiness of countenance worthy that venerable bird. These came by appointment, so that my father appeared at tea, and we had a very singular party—Italians, French, Irish, English, Jews, Protestants, Catholics, Deists, and what not! As Mr. Fontana . . . was the best qualified to entertain those about him, the conversation was entirely in French, so that Mr. Franco said at last, ‘I shall begin to forget I am in England.’”

Relating the events of a certain Monday in October, Susan says : “In the evening my Aunt Nanny came in to tea [from York Street], in hopes, she acknowledged, that she should meet with no foreigner, as I had told her we had seen Merlin, Piozzi, and Baretti so very lately. However, our tea things were not removed when we were alarmed by a rap at the door, and who should enter but *l'Imperatore del Canto* and his treasurer

Peace and Playfulness once more

—Pacchierotti and Bertoni. I leave you to guess who was charmed and who looked blank. They would not drink any tea, but seated themselves and stayed with us full three hours.

Pacchierotti inquired after Fanny's health, and mentioned his having written her a note, but said he was afraid it was full of errors. "'I am indeed a truly beast,' said he; 'my memory is withered, faded.' '*Impaired*' I told him was a better word.

"'I am *delightful* to be in this company,' he remarked presently. 'So great deal of sense. . . . All—your sister, yourself, your little brother. . . . All Mr. Dr. Burney's family. . . . But the best, I beg pardon, Ma'am,' bowing comically to a [lady visitor], 'is indeed Dr. Burney,' whom he warmly embraced.

"'Go away, Papa,' cried I, laughing. 'Can you stand that?' and accordingly they both ran away laughing together into the outward room."

Hearing one day that Mrs. Burney was indisposed, Pacchierotti desired Susan "to present his grief to her."

"Once when I set him right," says Susan, "he said 'you level me all the difficulties.'"

Apropos of some mistake he thought he had made on another occasion, he said he feared that he should become the object of Susan's "peculiar despire."

The House in St. Martin's Street

Baretti was a frequent visitor in St. Martin's Street. After he had been spending an evening there, Susan writes to Fanny: "Baretti was not in one of his violent, overbearing humours . . . but on the contrary was very sociable and good-humoured. . . . He paid me such fine compliments as you never heard the like! . . . And all this for possessing the art of *listening*, I believe; for I am sure he has never heard me *say* anything deserving his fine speeches. He inquired when you would return from Bright-helmstone. I told him Tuesday, and said I hoped soon after to see you. 'Yes,' said he, 'I hope she will pay you a visit, though now she has been exalted to the Thralic Majesty, you must not expect to see much of her.' "

Dr. Johnson was, as we know, on terms of friendship with Baretti. He writes to Mrs. Thrale, who had suffered from the Italian's strange conduct: "Poor Baretti! do not quarrel with him. . . . To be frank, he thinks, is to be cynical; and to be independent is, to be rude. Forgive him, dearest lady, the rather because of his misbehaviour. I am afraid he learnt part of me. I hope to set him hereafter a better example."

On one occasion we find the pompous Fulke Greville, Dr. Burney's former patron, partaking of the family dinner at half-past four o'clock.

Peace and Playfulness once more

"Just after tea Merlin* came in," writes Susan, "and entertained Charlotte, Edward, and [me] in a low voice, Mr. Greville being too much of a grim King of the Ghosts for him to dare to speak loud, but indeed he was infinitely diverting. . . . He is at work now on the machine so long projected for taking down extemporary compositions, and told my father that then would be the time for him to *profit of all his exterities*, in short he scarce spoke three words the whole evening without making some such odd blunder. . . . Edward went away at about nine, and we then began to suspect Mr. Greville meant to favour us, not only at dinner, but supper. Monstrous good of him! was it not? At last he said, 'Mrs. Burney, I think I am paying you a country visit.' At this hint the cloth was laid for supper. He had dosed between whiles from tea to supper—the great men always do at our house I think! However, at supper he was lively and good-humoured, and the convivial hilarity of the table was such that it stript poor Merlin of all his caution and reserve, and he talked away with his usual fluency and freedom, and made such blunders and such faces, and took off people in so ridiculous a manner, that Mr. Greville, who had never seen the like before, arched his eyebrows till they were in the middle of his forehead,

* The ingenious French mechanician.

The House in St. Martin's Street

and laughed with a mixture of ridicule and astonishment."

When the Thrales were in town, they would often join the impromptu gatherings in St. Martin's Street. Writing of one of these gatherings, Susan says: "We had, with the Thrales, Dr. Johnson, Sir Joshua Reynolds, and Mrs. and Miss Ord. It was a charming evening, as Dr. Johnson talked a great deal and delightfully; but it is so long ago I should mar the conversation by attempting to repeat it." On another occasion we find Dr. Johnson, accompanied by Mrs. Williams, joining the tea party; also Mrs. Reynolds and the American lady, Mrs. Paradise. But this gathering was not so successful as the former. "It was an odd sort of evening," writes Susan, "Dr. Johnson not being in extraordinary good cue, [and] Mrs. Reynolds shocked to death at being in *déshabille*, as Mrs. Paradise was dressed enough for the Pantheon."

Miss (or Mrs.) Reynolds, as she was usually called, Sir Joshua's sister, who lived with him and kept his house, was on intimate terms with the Burney family. She was a woman of decided talent, but her talent was combined with much eccentricity. Her favourite occupation was painting portraits. "Yesterday," writes Dr. Johnson to Mrs. Thrale, "I sat for my picture to Miss Reynolds perhaps for the tenth time, and I sat

Peace and Playfulness once more

near three hours with the patience of *mortal born to bear*; at last she declared it quite finished, and seems to think it fine." Johnson, however, did not compliment her on the production, for he told her it was "Johnson's grimly ghost." *

Mrs. Reynolds ventured into the paths of literature as well as of art. Having written an essay on Taste, she put it into the doctor's hands for his private criticisms. This essay, we are told, though possessing real merit, evinced much "perplexity of ideas," and Johnson frankly avows "that her notions, though manifesting a depth of penetration, and a nicety of remark, such as Locke or Pascal might be proud of, must everywhere be rendered smoother and plainer; and he doubts whether many of them are clear even to her own mind."

Joseph Nollekens, the sculptor, and his wife were occasional visitors in St. Martin's Street. Fanny has described Nollekens in one of her early diaries as "a jolly, fat, lisping, laughing, underbred, good-humoured man." "His merit," she says, "seems pretty much confined to his profession, and his language is as vulgar as his works are elegant." Half a dozen years after writing these words, she introduced his character into her novel of "Cecilia" as the vulgar, good-natured miser Mr. Briggs. Mrs. Raine Ellis, in her

* See Northcote's "Life of Sir Joshua Reynolds."

The House in St. Martin's Street

"Introduction" to that novel, has pointed out that "trait for trait he is here" with "his good-humour, his simplicity . . . his utter want of respect for persons of rank [or consequence] and the candour of his stinginess."

One day Nollekens "dropt in at Dr. Burney's while Piozzi and Signora Corri were singing a *duettino* . . . accompanied by the violin. There was applause; while it was lessening Nollekens called out, 'Dr. Burney! I don't like that kind of music. I heard a good deal of it in Italy, but I like the Scotch and English music better.' Dr. Burney, stepping forward, said, 'Suppose a person to say, "Well, I have been to Rome, saw the Apollo, and many fine works, but for all that give me a good barber's block!"' "*"

Mrs. Nollekens was as handsome as her husband was plain. She used sometimes to check her "little Nolly" in his uncouth sayings, by quoting Dr. Burney's admonitions.

When Dr. Johnson sat to Nollekens for his bust, he was much displeased, we are told, at the manner in which the head had been loaded with hair, which had been done, the sculptor declared, "to make him look more like an ancient poet." The hair, it seems, had been "modelled from the flowing locks of a sturdy Irish beggar, who, after he had sat an hour, refused to take a shilling,

* See J. T. Smith's "Life and Times of Nollekens."

Peace and Playfulness once more

stating that he could have made more by begging." *

This bust is now to be seen in the National Portrait Gallery, but Nollekens has given us another portrait of the Doctor which is not fanciful but realistic. It represents him as he lived and talked, in his wig and cocked hat and his everyday clothes—even portraying his bandaged gouty leg! This portrait appears in a group of the members of the "Turk's Head Club," which used to meet at a tavern of that name in Gerrard Street, Soho, and which afterwards became the famous "Literary Club."

A portion of this group, which is in private hands, is now reproduced. Dr. Johnson, as President, appears mounted aloft upon a table conversing with Sir Joshua Reynolds and Boswell. There are about a dozen figures in the whole group. They are from ten to eleven inches high, and are made of plaster and wax, coloured. The figures are placed in a long wooden box, open at the front, representing the parlour of the Turk's Head. The floor is sanded and the walls are adorned with the hats of the company hanging on pegs, with framed pictures and with chalked-up reckonings. In the centre Burke stands upon a chair making a speech, while at the further end Goldsmith, Nollekens,

* See Murphy's "Recollections of Dr. Johnson."

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and others are grouped round a small table. The tiny decanters and glasses, cut and engraved, must have been specially made for this miniature scene.

Many of the personages have removed their wigs for greater ease and comfort. Nollekens, who is in the act of sketching the company, wears his night-cap.

We must not omit to mention that various humorous verses are pinned against the walls of the tavern parlour. Here is a specimen of the wit of the Turk's Head :—

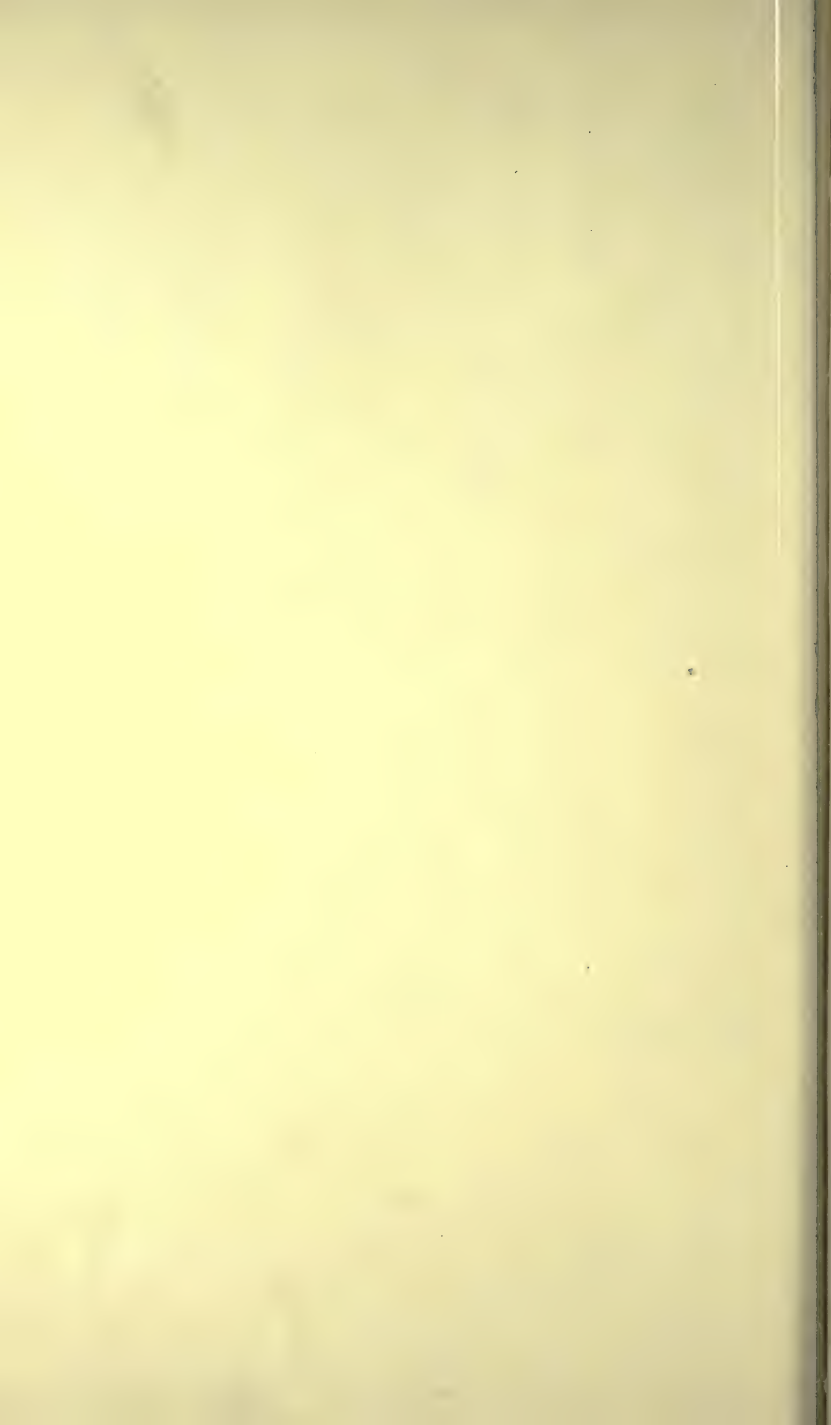
“Of all the trades from East to West
The cobbler's past contending,
He's like in time to prove the best
Who every day is mending.

“How soft his praise who can amend
The soles of all his neighbours,
Nor is unmindful of his end
Who every day thus labours.”

The name of James Barry, the painter, often occurs in Susan's Journals. One evening she had been drinking tea with her friends the Kirwans, in the Oxford Road. “At about eight,” she writes, “Mr. Barry came in and insisted on accompanying me home, though William was sent for me ; but he liked to finish his evening, I found, in St. Martin's Street ; and though poor Charlotte had the toothache, I knew she would not be sorry to see him, nor my



DR. JOHNSON, SIR JOSHUA REYNOLDS, AND JAMES BOSWELL
AT A MEETING OF THE "TURK'S HEAD CLUB"
Part of a sculptured group by Nollekens



Peace and Playfulness once more

mother, because, like herself, he loves argumentation better than any other thing in the world."

Mrs. Burney, who excelled in conversation, much enjoyed a good discussion of some literary subject, and she had her favourite talkers in the same way that her step-daughters had their favourite musicians. Barry, however, was a welcome guest to both mother and daughters.

Writing of an evening he had passed with them, Susan says: "We played at Dumb Crambo, and I got a forfeit from Bessey Kirwan and Mr. Barry, for which I made them dance a minuet. He assured me he didn't know how, and that he was the clumsiest fellow in the world. . . . He danced, if dancing it could be called, with his hands in his breeches pockets, and without a hat." But, nevertheless, he ventured to criticise his partner's performance. "'She wants grace and suavity in her motions,' the clumsy fellow observed, after she and her sister were gone."

CHAPTER XXVIII

THE YOUNGEST OF THE DIARISTS

AMONG the Burney manuscripts there is a small square packet of thin yellowish paper containing twenty-three pages of writing, stitched together at the back, and bearing the following inscription :—

CHARLOTTE ANN BURNEY,
her Journal,
1781.

None o' your fun,
Son of a Gun.

Charlotte was not twenty years of age when she penned these pages, which are now given to the public for the first time. They teem with the sort of fun and nonsense we should expect from a bright and lively girl, of whose style the reader has already had an example written at a still earlier date. At her present age Charlotte must have been a very attractive figure in society, for, while possessing much personal beauty, she

The Youngest of the Diarists

was both artless and unaffected. The "lovely Charlotte" Crisp calls her in allusion to Baret's mode of pronouncing her name.

The first entry in the Journal before us is on Friday, January 19th. Charlotte writes :—

"We have made a new acquaintance lately with Mr. and Mrs. Hoole, the translator of Metastasio, etc., and his wife, 'an honest, simple pair!' They are both so good, so good-natured, unaffected, open, cordial, and hospitable, that I *likes* 'em, and before I have known them half a year I daresay I shall *love* 'em. They are excessively civil to our family. Mrs. Hoole can take us to the play with an order every day in the week if we chose it. Susan and I went to Macbeth and saw Mrs. Yates in Lady Macbeth. She is very great in it."

Mr. Hoole held a post in the India House, but he devoted his leisure time to literature, and, besides his translations from the Italian, wrote several original plays, which brought him into connection with the theatres. He was an intimate friend of Dr. Johnson, as the reader may remember, his name occurring frequently in Boswell's "Life."

There is some doubt as to where Mr. Hoole and his family were living in the year 1781. It is known, however, that about this time he had chambers in Clement's Inn, and that he owned

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a small country house at Wandsworth, and it is possible that he may have used his chambers as his town house. In 1783 the Hooles (as we learn from a descendant of the family) were living at No. 56, Great Queen Street. So, whether it was within the precincts of the quaint old Inn of Court (now disappeared) or in the



CLEMENT'S INN.

elegant seventeenth-century house still to be seen in Great Queen Street, that Charlotte visited her new friends, we are unable to say.

In a portion of her Journal that has appeared in print she writes :—

“On Sunday last I spent the day entirely with my friends the Hooles. . . . I went to

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church with them and heard Dr. Franklin preach. They say he is a preacher that has had a *great run*, but I was not delighted with him. He has a hectoring manner . . . and has a bad voice."

Dr. Franklin, it seems, had a Chapel in Great Queen Street. Fanny has mentioned him in her "Diaries." He paid a call upon the Burneys soon after the publication of *Evelina*. "In entered a square old gentleman," she writes, "well-wigged, formal, grave, and important. . . . He regarded me with a certain dry kind of attention for some time, [and then asked], 'Is not your name Evelina, ma'am?'"

Charlotte, writing (in her unpublished journals) on February 2nd, remarks—

"I went to Mrs. Brooke's new tragedy the first night of it, with our friends Mr. and Mrs. Hoole. I think it interesting and affecting. . . . Mrs. Yates, in the character of Thameris, is charming. I would not wish to see it better performed. The title of the piece is 'The Siege of Sinope.' The prologue is written by a Mr. Colliers. I like it not; 'tis too full of petitions to the audience to weep. The epilogue is said to be written by Murphy, author of 'Way to Keep Him,' etc.; 'tis full of humour, and had justice done it by Mrs. Yates."

Mrs. Yates was the chief actress at this time at the large theatre in the Haymarket, usually

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called the "Opera House," where plays and operas were alternately performed. Fanny Burney, who was once taken to call on Mrs. Yates in her house adjoining the theatre, describes her as having "a very fine figure and a very handsome face," but says that the expression of her countenance was "infinitely haughty and hard." "As to poor Mr. Yates," she remarks, "he presumed not to take the liberty, in his own house, to act any other part than that of a waiter, in which capacity he arranged the chairs."

"When I came home [from the theatre]," continues Charlotte, "I found Mr. Poor here, waiting for an account of the play, and while I was in the middle of my relation—what foolish or ridiculous thing I said I can't recollect, but Mr. Poor burst out a laughing. I really was quite ashamed, and he is so new an acquaintance that I could not come to an explanation with him. I dare say he thinks I am a sad fool. . . . To be sure I was monstrous vexed, because he is such a clever man; and, moreover, I think like Madame Duval, that it is 'one or other the most disagreeables thing in the world to be laughed at.' . . .

"*Sunday, February 20th.*—Last Sunday all our family, except Fanny, who is at Chesington, went to the Hooles—there was one-and-thirty

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people—*tout ensemble*. Dr. Johnson and Mrs. Williams, the Baron Dimsdale and his lady. He looks like a country apothecary, and she like a fat landlady. He was a physician, and used to be yclept Dr. Dismal. He went over to Russia and inoculated the Empress, and she made him a Baron for his pains. There was the young Baron, an elegant-looking man. Mr. Lastripe,* Miss Mudge, who I think is vain and uninteresting—well-looking enough and no more. When gentlemen are talking to her she lifts up her eyes and then lets them fall down, as nice as can be. Mrs. Reynolds and her beautiful niece, Miss Fanny Johnson, who is thoroughly unaffected and untaught; not foolish and not unentertaining. I have been a great deal about with her, which I think very *high minded*, as she makes every one a foil to her. She is tall and has a very fine face, dark eyes, and a beautiful natural colour. There was young Mr. Hoole, who is sensible and cultivated. Mrs. Williams says he is one of the best lads that ever breathed; and Miss Polly Todd was there, a decided old maid, 'of a little brown colour,' as Pacchierotti said of Lady Hales. . . . There was Mr. Boughton Rons, nephew of Mr. Fulke Greville, a rich Nabob, and, my father says, remarkably cultivated; he is an elegant-looking

* Usually spelt Latrobe.

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man, and was very civil to me. I had him all to myself, and when I came home they called me the *Nabobess* ! . . . Mr. Humphreys, who I think conceited and unentertaining, and I like him not, for all he said to me was his usual question, 'Pray how do all your brothers and sisters do ?'

"The all-knowing Poor [was there], who came and stared at all the young ladies most violently, and made the following speech to me: 'Well, Miss Charlotte, and what do you say to it all?' with such contempt! How mad I was—'tis so provoking to be thought a fool by so clever a man! But what can I do? . . . Jem was making puns upon his name in a *soto voce*; he said when he was introduced to Mr. Poor, he longed to say, 'Sir, poor as you are, I shall esteem myself *rich* in your acquaintance!'—to be sure it is an irresistible name for a pun."

Writing on the same date (February 20th), Charlotte says: "There is a new name come up for the wits; they are called the 'Blue-stocking Club,' and for shortness the 'Blues.' Dr. Warren told my father that he had a card of invitation from a lady t'other day to invite him to meet a *little bit of blue*!"

The eccentric Mrs. Vesey, the reader may remember, was the original founder of this Club. "It owed its name," writes Fanny, in the

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"Memoirs" of her father, "to an apology made by Mr. Stillingfleet, in declining to accept an invitation to a literary meeting at Mrs. Vesey's, from not being, he said, in the habit of displaying a proper equipment for an evening assembly. 'Pho, pho,' cried she, while she looked inquisitively at him and his accoutrements; 'don't mind dress! Come in your blue stockings!'" This he did, "and those words, ever after, were fixed in playful stigma upon Mrs. Vesey's associations."

The lady in question, though possessing "really lively parts and a fertile imagination," had "the unguardedness of childhood, joined to an Hibernian bewilderment of ideas that cast her incessantly into some burlesque situation." But "all her oddities and mistakes," we are told, served but to give zest and originality to her assemblages. Mrs. Vesey, who suffered from deafness, "had commonly two or three or more ear-trumpets hanging to her wrists or slung about her neck . . . and the instant that any earnestness of countenance, or animation of gesture struck her eye, she darted forward, trumpet in hand, to enquire what was going on." But in her hurry she frequently clapped "the broad part of the brazen ear to her temple," and after waiting in vain to catch the speaker's remarks, she would exclaim dolefully, "I hope nobody has had any

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bad news to-night but as soon as I come near anybody, nobody speaks."

Mrs. Vesey's hatred of all stiffness and ceremony was such that, to prevent anything like a "circle" being formed, she usually placed her guests back to back, an arrangement which necessitated much twisting of necks on their part. Horace Walpole used to style these gatherings "Mrs. Vesey's Babel or Chaos."

Very different were the meetings of the Club in the house of Mrs. Montagu, the "Queen of the Blues," as she was called, where form and ceremony reigned supreme. Here the guests, on being received by their hostess in her renowned "Feather - Room," were conducted to seats solemnly arranged in a wide semi-circle facing the fire; and here the hostess, assuming a chair in their midst, placed "the person of the highest rank, or consequence, on one side of her, and the person the most eminent for talents on the other;" this "semi-circle remaining during the whole evening unbroken."

"Mrs. Montagu's form was stately," writes Fanny, "and her manners dignified. . . . Her conversational powers were of a truly superior order . . . but her reputation for wit seemed always in her thoughts, marring their natural flow and untutored expression. . . . Her smile . . . was rarely gay, and her liveliest sallies had [in

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them] a something of anxiety, rather than of hilarity—till their success was ascertained by applause." She was cautious in argument. "No sudden start of talent," or "vivacious new idea," we are told, enlivened her even course of reasoning, or roused her hearers to emulation.

In spite, therefore, of this lady's lofty talents, we think the members of the Blue-stockings Club must have found less entertainment in the sedate meetings held at her house than in the Bohemian gatherings at Mrs. Vesey's.

Charlotte Burney highly approved of "learned ladies." She writes in a portion of one of her Journals that has appeared in print: "In the afternoon Mr. Poor called on his way to a *state visit*. He thought proper to address his conversation to me; and so I got into an argument with him about Blue ladies. He set off (and indeed concluded) with such insolent speeches about women, that I could not resist answering him. . . . He began with saying that 'he could not bear Mrs. Montagu on account of her *disputing*,' and in other words said 'that a woman ought to read nothing but novels and plays, and talk of nothing but caps!'

"'You are not learned,' [said he], 'are you?—I'm sure *you* are not learned.'

"What an insolent wretch!"

Writing on February 20th in her unpublished

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Journals, she says; "I met Captain Williamson at Mrs. Boyle's a fortnight ago. Jem and all the officers say he is a tyrannical, overbearing black-guard; or else, had I judged for myself, I should



"JEM'S ROOM."

have liked him. He is a genteel-looking man, and full of rattle—and I like rattles."

Charlotte writes on Wednesday, February 28th: "Last Sunday we had a party here of Captain Jardins, a good-humoured, agreeable-looking, well-enough, one-armed captain, his two daughters,

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[and] two Spanish girls, young, raw, and . . . ugly. Baretti came in, accidentally, and talked away in Spanish to the girls. Captain Phillips, too, drank tea here, and Mr. Seward *par hazard*.

"The young ladies sung some Spanish songs, which I think very ugly; so *gutteral*. I don't believe any one of the party praised them *bonnement*.

" 'Charming, indeed,' cried my father; 'quite *national*.'

" 'Exceeding *singular*,' grinned out wicked Mr. Seward. . . . 'What charming girls they are! The youngest is quite a study for a painter!'

"They brought a portfolio with them of songs, which they thought it incumbent upon them to sing all through; which ceremony I could very well have excused, as it stopped conversation so; and as to Mr. Seward, I had much ado to keep my countenance, for at every fresh song that they began, he threw himself on his chair in such utter despondency that it was most delightfully ridiculous!

" . . . As I was coming home to-day, I heard a voice just behind me cry, 'How d'ye do, Miss Charlotte?' so I turned round, and found it was Mr. Seward, and he walked just home with me. . . . Mrs. Reynolds, who is always making odd speeches of one kind or another, made a *tolerable* odd one to me t'other day. 'Well,' says she,

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‘Miss Charlotte, as you are so great an admirer of wits, whenever you go home, you always find wits enough; and Mr. Seward’s a wit too, and they say Mr. Seward’s in love with you.’

“What an oddity she is! I think with Fanny, that I am rather a favourite with him, but it’s very wide of the mark his being in love with me. Such nonsense!

“*March 4th.*—On Thursday last Mr. Seward called here; he was exceeding entertaining—full of fun and pun. He said the people compared Mr. Gibbon’s bloated cheeks to the jowl of a salmon, and that they call him *cheek by jowl*.”

“Mr. Gibbon,” wrote Fanny, after seeing him for the first time, “has cheeks of such prodigious chubbiness that they envelope his nose so completely as to render it, in profile, absolutely invisible.”

There is a story told, by a contemporary French writer, of Gibbon being introduced to the stately old Madame du Deffand, who was blind. The lady, according to her custom, passed her fingers lightly across his face in order to ascertain what manner of man he was; but when they touched his cheeks she started back and, supposing that he was puffing them out purposely, exclaimed with indignation, “*Vous vous moquez de moi, Monsieur!*”

Charlotte writes on April 6th: “There is a



Reynolds

EDWARD GIBBON



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painter (Gardiner), an odd fish that I can make nothing of, that I met two or three times at Mrs. Boyle's." She goes on to say: "My mother, Fanny, and I drank tea last Sunday at Mrs. Reynolds's, and there we met Mr. Gardiner and a Mr. Northcote, a young painter, a disciple of Sir Joshua Reynolds—a conceited, half-witted, disagreeable, ugly man—who said that, 'as to Garrick's acting, *he* had ideas far beyond it,—and as to Dr. Johnson's benevolence and abilities, he knew several of his acquaintance very superior to Dr. Johnson!' Upon both these subjects my mother and Fanny condescended to dispute with him!

"*Tuesday, April 10th.*—On Saturday last I dined, drank tea, and supped at my new friends the Hooles. At dinner there were no females but Mrs. Hoole, Mrs. Williams, and me. Of gentlemen there were Mr. Boughton Rons, who did me the honour to make a point of sitting by me—but I can't get acquainted with him—he is civil to me too, but there is a *hauteur* in his manner that *knocks me up*. He is a young, handsome, dark, fierce-looking man, and, they say, knows almost every language that can be named; by all accounts his head is quite a *Babel*!—but he has no 'convivial hilarity' about him—and *those* are the characters to my taste, people that make an *ado*.

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“ . . . Mr. Boughton Rons sat at one side of me and Governor Bouchier on the other, a prosing Governor enough. Opposite to me sat Dr. Johnson in deep mourning, and much out of spirits, for the death of his friend Mr. Thrale, who died of a stroke of apoplexy last Wednesday morning. Next to Dr. Johnson sat Mr., or Captain (I know not which) Orme, who everybody admired but me—I thought him a *serious clout* and not agreeable . . . next to Mr. Boughton Rons sat a *bony Scot*, and next to him sat Mr. Hoole and his son, and next to him the flower of the flock—Mr. Boswell—the famous Mr. Boswell—who is a sweet creature. I admire and like him beyond measure. He is a fine, lively, sensible, unaffected, honest, manly, good-humoured character. I never saw him before. He idolizes Dr. Johnson, and struts about and puts himself into such ridiculous positions that he is as good as a comedy. He seems between 40 and 30; a good-looking man enough. N.B.—He has a wife in Scotland, so there is no *scandal* in being in raptures about him.”

Boswell mentions this same dinner-party in his “Life of Dr. Johnson.” It is amusing to compare his and Charlotte’s descriptions of the Governor and the Captain. “On Saturday, April 7th,” writes Boswell, “I dined with him [Johnson] at Mr. Hoole’s with Governour Bouchier and

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Captain Orme, both of whom had been long in the East Indies; and being men of good sense and observation, were very entertaining."

"Mr. Boswell made a bon-mot upon me," continues Charlotte, "that procured him great applause during dinner. They were speaking of the Indian women burning themselves upon the death of their husbands, and in the midst of it, Mr. Boswell called out from the bottom of the table, 'Miss Burney, and what do *you* think of this burning scheme?'

" 'Oh,' one of 'em cried, 'she had much rather *live*, I dare say!'

" 'Ay,' replied Mr. Boswell, 'then, Miss Burney, you would not like to be a *flaming beauty* in India, I fancy.'

". . . Miss Mudge came in to tea. During dinner they were talking of the Indian notions of their castes in life, that whatever caste they are born in so they are to remain, and so all the tribe of successors—so Mr. Boswell came and placed himself between Miss Mudge and me at the tea-table, and called to the gentlemen who had been talking of the Indian castes, 'Gentlemen, I like my *caste* very well now.'

"Mr. Boswell said he had an engagement at General Paoli's, and turned to Miss Mudge and me and cried, he 'was sorry for it.' . . . I shook my head at Dr. Johnson, as much as to say, he must

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wish to stay to be in his company—at which Mr. Boswell put himself in one of his ridiculous postures and cried, ‘Nay, shake not your gory locks *that way*!’

“. . . He is a charming creature—he told me he would call here, but I am afraid he won’t.”

Here Charlotte's Journal comes to an abrupt end, as the pages that follow are missing. Her last entry is—"The Dismals came to tea, a sad——" contrast, we presume she was going to say, to the company just described.



CHAPTER XXIX

A WEDDING

THE reader may remember that Charlotte Burney mentions in her Journal a certain Captain Phillips, who joined the family when they were drinking tea one Sunday evening.

Phillips, as the intimate friend of James, would have been a welcome guest in any case, but it happened that he possessed a special attraction in the eyes of the three enthusiastic daughters of the house; the fame of a gallant action having preceded him.

Both he and James had accompanied Captain Cook on his last and fatal voyage to the Pacific Islands; James as a naval officer, Phillips as an officer of Marines. Phillips was among the handful of Englishmen who were with Captain Cook on the island of Owhyhee when that great and good man was suddenly surprised and murdered. His followers, pursued by the savages, made all haste to regain their ships, and had just succeeded in reaching the boats put out for their

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rescue when Phillips saw "one of the marines, who was a bad swimmer, struggling in the water, and in danger of being taken by the enemy. He immediately jumped into the sea to his assistance, though much wounded himself, and after receiving a blow on the head from a stone which nearly sent him to the bottom, he caught the man by the hair and brought him safe off." *

Captain Phillips found a powerful attraction in St. Martin's Street in the person of Miss Susan Burney. The attraction was mutual, and before long the two became engaged to be married.

Fanny, writing to her sister of Captain Phillips at this period, says: "I repeat my love to him, which indeed he has sincerely, for I think he loves my own Susan, as I would wish her loved by him who is some time to succeed me as her closest friend and companion." †

The news of the engagement was early divulged to Mrs. Thrale, who writes to Fanny: "Well, but I did see Phillips written in that young man's honest face, tho' nobody pronounced the word; so I boldly bid him 'Good morrow, captain,' at the door, trusting to my own instinct. . . . Your sweet father, however, this day trusted

* See "History of Captain Cook's Last Voyage," by Captain King.

† Burney MSS.

A Wedding

me with the whole secret, and from my heart do I wish every comfort and joy for the match."

In the autumn of this same year (1781) Captain Phillips, who had been away for some months at sea, returned to England. Fanny writes to Mrs. Thrale from Chesington: "The Capitano has lately been promoted, and is now very earnest to accelerate matters; but my father, very anxious and fearful for poor Susanne, does not think there is *de quoi manger* very plentifully, and is as earnest for retarding them. For my own part, I think they could do very well. I know Susan is a very good economist, and I know there is not any part of our family that cannot live upon very little as cheerfully as most folks upon very much."

On the 22nd November, Captain Phillips made his appearance unexpectedly at Chesington Hall. Fanny writes that same evening to her sister: "I was never so pleased with a visit in my life, nor ever took one more kindly. We have been making merry, and talking treason all the evening. Captain Phillips has not only secured *me* by an attention to me so flattering and so affectionate, but he has won, I can plainly see, my Daddy and honest Kate and Mrs. Ham into the bargain, by the openness and frankness of his behaviour and conversation. He has quite entered into the spirit of the house.

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" . . . My Daddy made everybody drink your health after supper. He has no notion of reserve, you know, among friends!—however, no great occasion after being shown your picture in a gentleman's possession, which I must own I begged to have the *putting about*." *

Susan's portrait here alluded to is evidently the miniature which is reproduced, for the first time, in these pages. At the back of the picture are the words, "The beloved Susan Burney," in the handwriting of Fanny in later years.

Fanny was busily engaged, during her visit to Chesington, in writing her novel of *Cecilia*. She tried hard to keep her thoughts to her work, but they would stray, in spite of her efforts, to Susan and St. Martin's Street.

"Why, my dearest creature," she writes, "what are you all about? what is Captain P. driving at? why in such a sudden furore for *me*? Have you not plagues enough, filling your parlour, occupying your hearth, interrupting serious business, and interfering with treasonable *tête-à-têtes*? . . . Tell me then, my love, what you really mean, for I must have power to tell something, not very trifling, to Mr. Crisp, or he will not let me off without being absolutely affronted; so much has he set his mind upon my staying here till I have finished my book. I *have* hinted

* Burney MSS.

A Wedding

to him a design of eloping, but his arguments were *rage*, and his rage at the same time, I must own, was argument." *

Dr. Burney was as urgent as Mr. Crisp in keeping Fanny to her work—work which had been greatly retarded this year by long visits to her friend Mrs. Thrale, who had now become a widow. But as time passed on and the wedding-day began to be talked of as in the near future, poor Fanny's impatience at the restraint increased.

"I have not often wished anything more vehemently," she writes, early in December, "than to have had the power of answering my beloved Susy's last letter by taking a chaise, and quick! presto! begone! driving to St. Martin's Street without losing a moment! . . . I am dying to be with you. I know I could do so much, so many things for you in the settling way with folks. Besides—Lord bless me!—I shall not have a moment to fancy me a new suit!—I have all the colours of the rainbow now dancing before me, but can't possibly decide at this distance from the *beau-monde*.

"What *shall* we do, my dearest girl? I will scrawl night and day if I can. . . . O if this book proves as great a bore to any one else as just now to me!—L—d help it! . . . What shall I do with my father to prevent displeasure . . . at my return? . . .

* Burney MSS.

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I wait here now for nothing else ! I *will* manage Mr. Crisp, I *will* throw my book into a bonfire . . . sooner than for *any* thing but my father stay away another minute." *

The wedding was finally fixed for an early day in January, and Fanny writes on December 18th, just before leaving Chesington: "My most beloved Susy, any good or happiness or comfort to you would almost raise me out of the grave. I will drive every ill thing from me at this important crisis of your life, to enjoy your good prospects and be glad in your fair hopes of their continuance. I should not be *thought* very glad neither, if I were seen by any strangers—for there is something to me in the thought of being so near parting with you as the inmate of the same house—room—bed—confidence and life, that is not very *merryfying*, though I would by no means have things altered. Oh, far from it !" †

A paragraph in the *Gentleman's Magazine*, for the month of January, 1782, announces that the marriage of Captain Molesworth Phillips and of Miss Susan Burney took place on the 10th instant in the Church of St. Martin's-in-the-Fields.

This church, with its imposing pillared portico, and its broad flight of stone steps, must be the same in appearance now as it was in the Burneys'

* Burney MSS.

† *Ibid.*

A Wedding

day, but its surroundings are greatly changed. The eastern side of the open space, now forming Trafalgar Square, was then occupied by the "Royal Mewes" and the "Queen's Mewes,"



BEDROOMS OF THE THREE SISTERS.

while both in front and on either side of the building were the low gabled roofs of a labyrinth of small alleys known as "the Bermudas."

The interior of the church was probably as sombre then as it is now, and we can fancy the little wedding party forming a bright spot against

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the dark background of high-backed pews and heavy galleries.

There is no record extant of that day's proceedings, but it is evident, from what Fanny says in an unpublished letter to Susan, that the bride and bridegroom went to Chesington—the Burneys' beloved Liberty Hall—for their honeymoon, and also that they were accompanied thither by Fanny in her capacity of bridesmaid, according to the custom of those days.

In this letter, written upon her return home, and dated January 23rd, Fanny tells of her safe arrival in St. Martin's Street, "after"—as she says—"having left you with the only person in the world I have yet known that could lessen my regret in leaving you at all."

In the month of February, Captain and Mrs. Phillips went to Ipswich, where they resided for some time. There Fanny paid them a visit in the following July. Writing to her father about her beloved sister, she says: "I would that you could but look on [at] the unaffected happiness, gaiety, and lightness of heart of this dear creature, and the worthiness, good-humour, sense, drollery, and kind-heartedness of her excellent help-mate. I could have no greater happiness myself," she adds, "than I receive from witnessing their mutual comfort." *

* Burney MSS.

CHAPTER XXX

CECILIA

FANNY BURNEY had begun to write her novel of *Cecilia* as far back as the autumn of 1780, but the many interruptions that occurred in the following year much interfered with its progress. Besides the absorbing interest of her sister's approaching marriage, more and more of her time was claimed by Mrs. Thrale, especially since Mr. Thrale's death. The two friends, it is true, were warmly attached to each other, but sometimes Mrs. Thrale would show an eagerness to possess almost a monopoly of Fanny's affection.

Among the Burney MSS. there is a letter of Fanny's to her friend touching upon this delicate subject.

Fanny is writing from Chesington, where she had just received the gift of a piece of silk for a dress from Mrs. Thrale :—

“O dear ! O dear ! What can I say—write—do—to my dearest, too kind, too sweet Mrs. Thrale ? Indeed !—indeed I am wholly at a loss.

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I look at the silk and try to find something to say about it, but it is so much too good, too handsome, too *everything* for *me, my lady*, that I am quite baffled. Ah, dearest madam, the pleasure you take in kind, friendly, and sweet actions, must *here* be all that can pay you! I have nothing to offer but what you have had long since,—what you had indeed before a third part of the kindness you have shown me made it your *due*,—for my heart was at first a *free gift*!

“. . . You see therefore, dearest madam, how many favours you have causelessly thrown away! Often, indeed, have I recommended to you to bestow them where they might *make* friends, for here the business is already done: and with all your liberality of spirit, I shall think you have the most rapacious of hearts if you wish for still more love and fondness than you now have from me;—for sincerely speaking, you *ought* not to gain an inch more, and *cannot* but by taking place of the very few who have a *right* to pre-eminence which, I will fairly own to you, I should blush to see them robbed of.

“I fear I have written queerly, but I know you will not be angry. I write openly, and when I speak upon the ‘internal’ to you, why should I not let you see it as it is? I am sure few others have so good reason to like the sight.” *

* Burney MSS.

Cecilia

It is curious here to see the way in which Crisp deals with the subject of the division of Fanny's affections.

"Molly Chute," he writes, "(an intimate and infinitely agreeable old Friend of mine, long since dead,) when I used to desire her to love me a great deal more, would say, 'Look ye, Sam, I have this stock of love by me,' putting out her little finger, 'and I can afford you so much,' measuring off perhaps half the length of her nail, 'and I think that's pretty fair.'"

"I thought so too, and was well content. But what shall I do with *you* who have so many to content? You have but your five loaves and your two fishes, and can you renew the miracle and feed five thousand? Well, I must do as I may, and that is the 'very Nuthook humour of it.' " *

The year 1781 brought trials of various kinds into Fanny's life. Besides the death of Mr. Thrale, to whom she was sincerely attached, there came a death in her sister Hetty's young family which touched her yet more nearly. After noting in her Diary the events of August of that year, she goes on to say: "Then followed the most melancholy week with my dearest Hetty and the sweet suffering little saint that died almost in my arms, and left me a regret for him

* Burney MSS.

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that, young as he was, I do indeed believe I shall always feel." *

In the following autumn Fanny's health gave way, and she had to submit to the strange medical treatment of her day. She writes to Crisp from Streatham on October 2nd: "I have very little fever but very much cough. Sir Richard Jebb thinks not so well of me as I think of myself—few people I suppose do!—and when he was here last Sunday ordered me to be blooded again—a thing I mortally dislike. Asses milk also he forbids, holding it too nourishing, and even potatoes are too solid food for me! He has ordered me to live wholly on turnips, with a very little dry bread, and what fruit I like: but *nothing else* of any sort. But I may drink Barley-water and Rennet whey at pleasure!" †

This letter, in spite of its writer's ill-health, was accompanied by a few sheets of her Diary and an offer to send some more shortly.

Crisp writes on October 17th: "If I wish it you will send me a few more sheets of Journal! Why . . . you know in your own conscience there is nothing I suck in so greedily. I fancy all the odd, uncommon, unaccountable characters in the nation flock to you to sit for their pictures!

"... Well, the Horse-leech hath two daughters, saying 'Give, give!' I say the same—but that

* Burney MSS.

† *Ibid.*

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is not all I say—I say ‘Come, come!’ Do but get [tolerably well] and you shall here follow your doctor’s orders as strictly as where you are. You shall have your old room, your old bed, a great chair, a good fire—and as for starving, I defy Mrs. Thrale with all her ingenuity to come near us. . . . Honest Ham and Kate long to see you, and are continually crying out, ‘When does Miss Fanny come?’ ” *

At the end of this letter Fanny has written in later years :—

“N.B. This was followed by a visit of two or three months to this wise, kind, and invaluable friend.”

But before that visit could be paid Fanny had to be withdrawn from Thrale Place, which was no easy matter. Both her ‘Daddies’ had become anxious at the long cessation of her literary work, especially as the fact that she was writing a new novel had got wind, and the admirers of *Evelina* were all eagerly looking for its appearance.

Dr. Burney first tried his influence with Mrs. Thrale, but without success. Then Mr. Crisp, in spite of his infirmities, took the field. He went to Streatham and managed, without offending the lady of the manor, to bear off his Fannikin to Chesington, and finally to establish her in “the

* Burney MSS.

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quiet and exclusive possession of what he had denominated the 'Doctor's Conjuring Closet.'"

The progress of *Cecilia* had been delayed more than once by illness, and Mrs. Thrale sometimes feared that Fanny might resume her work before she was fit to do so. Mrs. Thrale touches on this point in her own lively way:—

"I talked very freely with Dr. Burney," she writes, "about matters and things and told him that your anxious earnestness to oblige him had caused much of the illness we lamented. 'Why,' says he, 'I did tease her to write while she was away, that the book, so long expected, might at length be done.'"

"'Very true, my dear Sir,' says Saucebox, 'but whoever robs me of my *Friend* and leaves me a *Book* in her place, injures me grossly, tho' the Book were an *Iliad*!'" *

Fanny, as we have seen, left Chesington towards the end of December, in order to be present at her sister Susan's wedding early in January. By the end of January she was again hard at work upon her novel.

We have seen the original MS. of *Cecilia*. The name of the heroine had at first been Albinia, but was afterwards changed to Cecilia, Albinia being carefully erased throughout the work, and Cecilia substituted in its place.

* Burney MSS.

Cecilia

"I am dreadfully busy," she writes to Susan on February 12th, "and would not write to any human being but yourself for any pay, so horribly aches my hand with copying. I have just finished that drudgery to the 1st volume, and yesterday I spent in Tavistock Street [taking it with me]. . . . I came off, you will suppose, with flying colours, for the party was Mr. B., Hetty, two Aunts, and Edward, and their approbation costs them little for *me*, and therefore I dare build nothing on it. When they will see the 2nd volume I can give no guess myself." *

And again she writes a couple of months later, "My Father himself told Pacc of his reading and fondness for the 1st volume, and Pacc is half wild with joy and eagerness!—he dies, he says, 'to pry a *littel* into so great work.'" †

"Cecilia; or Memoirs of an Heiress," was published, in five 12° volumes, in the month of June (1782), by Messrs. Payne and Cadell, who gave the authoress £150 for the copyright.

How surprised Pacchierotti must have been when he opened the book to find his own name contained therein! This occurs on the occasion of a visit of Cecilia's to the Opera House, where "Artaserse" is being performed, and when she hears, for the first time, the voice of this great singer. "She found herself by nothing so deeply

* Burney MSS.

† *Ibid.*

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impressed," writes the author, "as by the plaintive and beautiful simplicity with which Pacchierotti uttered the affecting repetition of *sono innocente* ! His voice, always either sweet or impassioned, delivered those words in a tone of softness, pathos, and sensibility that struck her with a sensation not more new than delightful."

When the book appeared before the public it created a great sensation. Early in July Fanny was present at a gathering in Sir Joshua Reynolds' house, where, on her arrival, she found the company eagerly discussing her various characters. She writes to her father, who was then absent from home :—

"[Amongst the guests] was the dear Dr. Johnson, who had been puffing off my book, till the moment of my arrival. . . . Miss Palmer is mad with fondness for young Delville. . . . Sir Joshua, who is still only in the 1st volume, says he foresees Monckton will be the victor by his deep designing character, but he seems most diverted by Miss Leeson, whose 'Yes, Ma'am,' 'No, Ma'am,' 'I don't know,' and 'I can't tell,' he quoted perpetually. Dr. Johnson supports Hobson at the Head of the Tribe, and says it is a very perfect character, and Simkins and Miss Larolles are very highly in his favour.

"Just as I was coming away and passing him, he took my hand and, with sundry kind

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words too tender for a third person, he said, 'I have again read Harrel's death—it is finely done;—it is *very* finely done!!'”*

Towards the end of July Fanny went to Ipswich to visit her sister Susan and Captain Phillips. In the mean time she had received a letter from Mr. Crisp expressing the warmest approval of her book. He had read it, already, at an earlier stage, and had suggested certain changes, some of which Fanny had carried out. She writes to him from Ipswich on August 5th: “Thanks, my dear Daddy, for your very kind letter. I need not, I am sure, tell you how highly it gratified me. . . . From the moment you peeped into my room at Chesington with ‘Annikin! Annikin! may I come in?’ ‘Yes!——’ ‘It will do! it will *do*!’ O! from the moment I heard those welcome words from the severest of all my judges, I took inward courage, and my hopes grew comfortably and lessened my apprehensions . . . though I cannot say they ever gave me a promise of such success as last Tuesday’s post brought me in a letter from Mr. Burke!!!”†

In this letter Burke, after thanking the authoress for “the very great instruction and entertainment he had received from her new present bestowed on the public,” goes on to say,

* Burney MSS.

† *Ibid.*

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"There are few—I believe I may say fairly there are none at all—that will not find themselves better informed concerning human nature, and their stock of observation enriched, by reading your *Cecilia*. They certainly will, let their experience in life and manners be what it may."

Among the Burney MSS. there is a letter from Dr. Burney to his daughter Susan, in which he alludes to these words of the great orator. "Burke thanked Fanny," he writes, "for her *instruction*, and when I told Johnson this, he said, 'Tis very true, Sir, no man can read it without having ideas awakened in his mind that will mend the heart. When Fanny reasons and writes from her own feelings she is exquisite.'"



CHAPTER XXXI

COMPANY AT BRIGHTHELMSTONE

TOWARDS the end of the month of October (1782) Fanny Burney joined her friends Mrs. Thrale and Dr. Johnson at Brighthelmstone, where Mrs. Thrale had a house in West Street.

In those days Brighton, we are told, was but "a large country village by the sea." It boasted, however, its Assembly Rooms, both at the "Old Ship" and also at the "Castle Inn," where a Master of the Ceremonies presided alternately.

When Fanny alighted from her coach, and was welcomed by Mrs. Thrale, she brought into the place a personality that created a widespread sensation. Her new novel was everywhere the theme of conversation here as it had been in London. "No romance was ever more eagerly snatched from the counters of the booksellers," remarks Macaulay. "*Cecilia* was placed by general acclamation among the classical novels of England."

Writing in her Journal on October 27th,

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Fanny speaks of having paid a call on Mr. and Mrs. Pepys, who were then in Brighthelmstone. "We did not stay with them long," she says, "but proceeded to the Rooms. Mr. Pepys . . . wanted to frighten me from going by saying, 'And has Miss Burney courage to venture to the Rooms? I wonder she dares!'

". . . I thought of him . . . when I was at the Rooms, for most violent was the staring and whispering as I passed and repassed; in so much that I shall by no means be in any haste to go again to them."

And in a letter to her father she says: "I seem as much a *show* to all the folks as Omai could be; and they stare with as much curiosity, though they whisper with rather more caution."

In a letter to Susan, dated October 28th, after speaking of her journey, she says: "The dear Captain's cakes were most acceptable, and I have still some for *sharp set moments* upon occasions of late dinners; for we commonly sit not down till 5 o'clock.

"I am very busy indeed in cap and tippet manufacturing, and am so visited and *muched* here, you would suppose me something dropt from the skies." *

Again she writes playfully—

"Will you not, my dear Captain, be charmed

* Burney MSS.

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to hear that it is quite the *ton* [in this place] to be of your advice about my phiz and my figure? O, it is comical to excess to see how the people's rage for something marvellous leads them to talk of me just as Edward has painted me! His picture . . . ought to live at this place, where everybody would confess its *justice*.



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“The day after our first appearance at the Rooms . . . Mrs. Thrale came into my chamber and said, ‘I have a secret to tell you—you know I told you, you might set up for a Beauty when you fail as a Wit, and now it’s done for you at once; for Harry Cotton comes and tells me how all the men admired you at the Rooms.’ . . . I have good reason to believe . . . that the man of men here, Mr. Kaye himself, has led the way in this surprising discovery, for which I think he deserves a premium.

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"This much, dear Capitano, quite in private. I beg our *secret* may not transpire." *

Edward Burney's "picture" of Fanny, alluded to in this letter, is the well-known portrait, an engraving of which prefixes her "Diary and Letters." When Edward was painting it at Chesington, in the summer of this same year (1782), Fanny wrote in an unpublished letter to Susan, "I believe if I am not underwritten no one would guess he ever saw me; much less that I sat for the Picture called mine. Never was Portrait so violently flattered. I have taken pains incredible to make Edward magnify the features and darken the complexion, but he is impenetrable in action, though fair and docile in promise."

But Edward Burney painted his cousin a second time, and this portrait seems to have been more like the real Fanny Burney than the other, especially as we see in it the likeness to her father.† The reader may, perhaps, remember that when Mrs. Montagu first made Fanny's acquaintance, she remarked, "I can see that Miss Burney is very like her father."

It appears from an unpublished letter of Fanny's to her sister Susan, dated June 30th, 1783, that a miniature likeness of her was also painted. "I sat for the last time [on Saturday]

* Burney MSS.

† This portrait is reproduced in "Juniper Hall."

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to Mr. Boyle," she writes, "and my miniature is now improved into a flattered Picture. I don't know whether Mr. Boyle or his wife is most fond or most proud of it—but I feel always teased by *their* having it and not my Susan."

Among the various social gatherings in Brighthelmstone at which Fanny was present, she mentions, in an unpublished letter, one that took place on the 12th November at the house of a Lady de Ferrars. "Late in the evening," she writes, "the *Morning Herald* was brought in, just arrived from town. Lord de Ferrars . . . with a significant smile, whispered something to Mrs. Thrale, and put it into her hand. She took it, and Lady de Ferrars insisted upon her reading aloud.

"I was then engaged in some tittle-tattle with Harriet Ellerker, and did not at first listen, but what was my surprise to hear presently 'Cecilia is a charming young woman'; and in a few instants followed a speech in verse, supposed to be made by Miss Larolles! I was quite petrified with astonishment. . . . The imitations were carried on to old Delville, Morrice, Lady Honoria, and Mr. Meadows. I could not imagine what they all meant, nor whence they came. I have since found they were in an Epilogue, written by Miles Andrews for Mrs. Hobart, to speak at a private play."

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We find from an examination of the newspapers of November 11th (1782), that these verses appeared in no less than five London papers. The play was "All in the Wrong," and it was performed at the house of the Honourable Mrs. Hobart, at Ham Common. We will give a few verses of this Epilogue:—

"Our mimic scene closed ; ere you rise to go home
For a little small-talk, lady-like I am come.

* * * * *

At the Opera assembled some smart Maccaroni
Begins with some belle the gay conversazione :
'Fore Gad, that Cecilia's a charming young woman !
Were you Miss *Larolles* at the play at Ham Common ?'
'Oh yes, to be sure ! You can't think how delightful,
The men were so bad, and the women so frightful,
Such a crowd, so much heat, and so little to drink,
The time passed so pleasantly on you can't think.'
'Can there be any pleasure, ma'am ?' *Meadows* retorts,
'From my heart I hate all amusements and sports.'
—'Dear, dear, now how odd ! when I vow and declare
You sat picking your teeth all the time we were there.'
'There—where—pick my teeth—about what ? about when ?
Is it me you allude to ?—indulge me agen.'"

Fanny concludes the account of her evening's experiences by saying, "The verses were shown afterwards to Dr. Johnson, and when we got home, 'Ah,' said he, '*this* is the *She* ! She fills the whole world !—a little rogue ! a *World* she is in herself, with her Harrels and her Hobsons !'" *

* Burney MSS.

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In the mean time the *Morning Herald* had found its way to St. Martin's Street, and the Epilogue had been read with avidity there. Dr. Burney writes to Fanny: "It is a fresh testimony of *Cecilia's* notoriety and publicity among *les gens comme il faut*, as I never remember of any book so soon after publication . . . And so here's a second edition advertised to-day; to be published with *all possible expedition*—by which I conjecture that [the book] is now out of print." *

At the end of Dr. Burney's epistle there is a postscript written by Charlotte.

"I have copied out the Epilogue for you," she says. "My dearest Father and I are both delighted to find how popular your Book is.

"Sweet Pacchierotti was here yesterday. He talked of you as usual—said he counted the moments till your return. . . . He read the Epilogue, and was much pleased with it. He said, 'Miss Fanny, her Book is quite in the fashion now. I hear of it continually; its merit *puffs out* wherever I go!' and then he congratulated himself upon the expression '*puffs out*.'" †

The harrowing scenes in the last volume of *Cecilia* seem to have tried the nervous susceptibilities of the ladies—nay, even of the gentlemen—of that day to a surprising extent.

Lady Hales writes to Susan Phillips:—

* Burney MSS.

† *Ibid.*

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"We have a quarrel against your wicked Sister who sends us into people's houses with our eyes swelled out of our heads with weeping for her lovely, her amiable Cecilia! . . . Never sure was there a tale of woe more strongly wrought than that of the miserable Cecilia's delirium! . . . What powers does your Sister possess thus to work upon the passions!

"Had any one come into the room [whilst we were reading the book] they would have been surprised. My children wept and sob'd aloud. My heart was bursting with agony! and we all seemed in despair!"

Fanny writes from Brighton: "Miss Benson and Mrs. Hatsel called, . . . Miss Benson told me that [when reading] the last volume [she] cried and roared so vehemently that she could not make her appearance [in public] and was forced to give up going to the last Ball.

"'But as to Mr. Hatsel' [said his wife], 'he is madder about [the book] than all of us, and especially the last volume; he never takes it up but he is obliged to run out of the room, it affects him so much; yet he is hardly ever at ease when it is out of his hand.'

"'Miss Benson . . . said she thought I had taken 'a most unwarrantable liberty with everybody's nerves, to write in such a manner!'

"'. . . Ah, poor Miss Benson!' said Mrs.

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Hatsel, 'she could hardly read two words following—now a sentence, now a sob ;—no wonder we could not get to the Ball.' " *

Even the "learned ladies" self-control succumbed to the tragic scenes in *Cecilia*. Mrs. Chapone's nerves, we are told, were so much shattered that she was deprived of sleep for a whole week ; while the Duchess of Portland and Mrs. Delany " thrice wept their way through the five volumes." Mrs. Montagu, it is true, was less discomposed, but even she had her share in the general commotion. "Miss Burney," she said, "has made me guilty of a negligence I never practised before ; I left all my bills and papers unexamined and never attended to any business while the book was unfinished." †

During Mrs. Thrale's and her friends' sojourn at Brighton, Dr. Johnson seems to have been in an unusually irascible frame of mind. But whatever his behaviour was to others, he was invariably gentle and tender to his "little Burney."

Fanny writes early in November to her father :—

"Our dear Dr. Johnson keeps his health amazingly, and with *me* his good humour ; but to own the truth, with scarce anybody else. I am quite sorry to see how unmercifully he attacks and riots people. He has raised such a general

* Burney MSS.

† *Ibid.*

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alarm that he is now omitted in all cards of invitation sent to the rest of us. . . .

"Poor Mr. Pepys was so torn to pieces by him the other night, in a party at home, that he suddenly seized his hat, and abruptly walked out of the room in the middle of the discourse. . . . Dr. Delap confesses himself afraid of coming as usual to the house; and Mr. Selwyn, having yesterday declined meeting him at Mr. Hamilton's, ran away before his return home in the utmost terror of being severely reprimanded for this refusal." *

Boswell, as we know, often suffered in this way. On one occasion, he tells us, after he had experienced especially rough treatment, administered in the presence of strangers, he remarked to Dr. Johnson, "I said to-day to Sir Joshua, when he observed that you *tossed* me sometimes, I don't care how often, or how high he tosses me, when only friends are present, for then I fall upon soft ground; but I do not like falling on stones, which is the case when enemies are present. I think this is a pretty good image, Sir." *Johnson*: "Sir, it is one of the happiest I ever have heard."

Dr. Johnson, conscious of his nervous irritability of temper, used sometimes, Mrs. Thrale tells us, to envy women their resource in the

* Burney MSS.

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peaceful occupation of needlework. "Needlework, that most effectual sedative, that grand soother and composer of woman's distress," as a graceful writer has termed it. "A man cannot hem a pocket-handkerchief," said a lady of quality to Johnson one day, "and so he runs mad and torments his family and friends."

"The expression," writes Mrs. Thrale, "struck the Doctor exceedingly, and when one acquaintance grew troublesome, and another unhealthy, he used to quote [this] observation, 'A man cannot hem a pocket-handkerchief.'" *

But his best friends, as we know, understood and loved him dearly, indeed, perhaps all the more for his possessing some failings common to humanity. "He has nothing of the bear," said Goldsmith, "but the skin." And Sir Joshua, in his "Essay on Johnson's Character," remarks of him, "To those that loved him not, as rough as winter; to those who sought his love, as mild as summer;" quoting, with a slight variation, the well-known description of Cardinal Wolsey's character in "Henry VIII."

Among the Burney MSS. there is a letter from the Duc de Chartres, inviting Dr. Burney to meet Dr. Johnson at dinner on a certain Sunday "between three and four o'clock," which, the writer says, "is the hour most convenient to

* Piozzi Anecdotes.

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the excellent old Doctor, the best piece of man, indeed, that the Duke ever saw."

Mrs. Thrale and her special coterie were fond of making impromptu translations of any little French poem that took their fancy.

"Some one in company," she writes, "commended the verses of M. de Benserade, 'à son Lit.'

"*Théâtre des ris et des pleurs,
Lit ! où je nais, et où je meurs,
Tu nous fait voir comment voisins
Sont nos plaisirs et nos chagrins.'*

"To which Johnson replied without hesitating:—

"*In bed we laugh, in bed we cry,
And born in bed, in bed we die ;
The near approach a bed may shew
Of human bliss to human woe.'*

"We had got a little French print among us at Brighthelmstone," she says, "of some people skating, with these lines written under:—

"*Sur un mince chrystal l'hyver conduit leurs pas,
Le precipice est sous la glace ;
Telle est de nos plaisirs la légère surface,
Glissez, mortels ; n'appuyez pas.'*

"I begged translations from everybody: Dr. Johnson gave me this:—

"*O'er ice the rapid skater flies,
With sport above and death below ;
Where mischief lurks in gay disguise
Thus lightly touch and quickly go.'*"

CHAPTER XXXII

FAREWELL TO THE HOUSE IN ST. MARTIN'S STREET

ON leaving Brighthelmstone early in December (1782), Fanny Burney returned to London and was settled once more in St. Martin's Street.

The ovations to her upon the success of *Cecilia* continued in full force. The book had obtained a wide popularity—a popularity which soon extended even beyond our own shores. When ten years later Fanny came into connection with the French Emigrés, among whom were Talleyrand, Madame de Staël, and the Duc de Liancourt, she found, to her surprise, that they knew her story by heart, and heard herself addressed by them by the name of "*Cecilia*"! She then learnt, with special pleasure, that the great and good Lafayette had found a solace, during his dreary prison life, in her works. "To the universal admiration for Miss Burney," he writes, on his release from captivity, "I add a homage which is based on personal gratitude.

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Her writings alone had the power to make me occasionally forget my fate."

Among the Burney relics is a small German pocket-calendar for the year 1789, which contains passages from *Cecilia* translated into German, together with several illustrations of scenes in that novel.

Fanny, however, as we have seen, was happily unspoilt by success. "There is," writes Macaulay, "abundant proof that she enjoyed with an intense, though a troubled joy, the honours which her genius had won; but it is equally clear that her happiness sprang from the happiness of her father, her sister [Susan], and her dear Daddy Crisp. . . . If she recorded with minute diligence all the compliments delicate and coarse which she heard wherever she turned, she recorded them for the eyes of two or three persons who had loved her from infancy . . . and to whom her fame gave the purest and most exquisite delight."

Among the Burney MSS. there is a letter from Crisp to Fanny, written a few months after the publication of *Evelina*, in which he says that nothing will satisfy him but "a minute Journal d'ye see — nothing less — send all; don't be maidenly and modest on this occasion. Remember Pope, don't blush; and as I know already, in general, the honours you have received—sure you need not be shy about the particulars."

Farewell

Besides the homage paid to her as a writer, Fanny received homage of a more tender description in her private life ; upon which light is thrown in the unpublished letters now in our hands. Among her admirers — one who worshipped her as a being far out of his reach — was the gentle Pacchierotti. “One day,” she writes, “he said ‘he hoped for the sake of the Public I should never marry, as, if I kept single, I should be the first genius in England!’ I promised him there was little danger of my taking that road to quarrel with the Public!”

As the time of his departure from England approached, he grew more and more melancholy, we are told, and when spending his last evening in St. Martin’s Street, he threw aside his customary reserve and confessed to Fanny his partiality, declaring “that in some other situation it might have made the whole blessing of his life!” “Poor, sweet Pacchierotti!” she exclaims, in a letter to Susan. “What a strange world is this!”

Before parting with our friend Pacchierotti, we should like to say that his career was evidently uninjured by his hopeless attachment to Fanny Burney ; indeed, it may possibly have been ennobled by it. His gentle and modest disposition, in the midst of the excitement of public applause, was conspicuous, it seems, throughout his life, and when he died, at an advanced age, his last

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words were a prayer to God "to be admitted to one of the humblest choirs in heaven."

After reading Fanny's words about the improbability of her ever marrying, it is pleasant to reflect that a singularly happy marriage awaited her in the future. It is true that a period of trial and of separation from those she loved was to intervene during her life at Court, but in the society of her husband, the good Chevalier d'Arblay, and of her little son Alex, all those trials were forgotten, as were also the splendours of a palace, for in their sweet cottage home at Bookham they found

"room for heart expansion
And peace and joy to dwell."

Crisp did not live to know that the joys of married life were in store for his Fannikin; but in one of his letters he says to her:—

"When you come to be old . . . then live upon remembrance, and think that you have had your share of the good things of this world and say, 'For what I have received the Lord make me thankful!'"

And now for a word or two about the other members of the family.

Charlotte was happily married in 1786 to a Mr. Clement Francis (Private Secretary to Warren Hastings). He had read *Evelina* with delight in India, and came over to England

Farewell

hoping to make its authoress his wife ; but his plans were changed by his meeting and falling in love with her sister instead !

By this time both James and Charles were also married.

Many changes were thus gradually taking place in the household in St. Martin's Street—changes in *outward* circumstances, but the love which bound the family together remained unchanged. Their mutual affection, as well as “their integrity and high principles, shine out in every page of their diaries and letters.” This is still further manifested in the great mass of material forming the Burney MSS.

“’Tis a sweet family !” cries Mrs. Thrale, one day ; and Pacchierotti rejoins, “Sense and wit inhabit here ; sensibility has taken up her abode in this house !”

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Let us take a last glance at the home of the Burney family as it was in their day. We enter the drawing-room. There are its three lofty windows overlooking St. Martin's Street, and there is its carved chimney-piece around which the Burneys and their friends so often sat and talked, and where the words of Garrick and of Sir Joshua Reynolds and of the great Dr. Johnson were heard. And there, opening out of the drawing-room, is the library, or music-room, with

The House in St. Martin's Street

the two harpsichords upon which Hetty and her husband played their brilliant duets; and where the soul-stirring tones of Pacchierotti's voice were so often heard.

As we turn away we catch a glimpse of Dr. Burney's study.

And now we are descending the wide oaken staircase, and it seems as if the strains of music were following us. We pause for a moment on the threshold, and then, as we pass into the outer world, the door of the house in St. Martin's Street closes behind us.



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